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Saying Goodbye to USA Shooting
By Mary Beth Vorwerk

After 17 issues of USA Shooting News, I am sad to say that this will be my final issue as editor and as Media and Public Relations Manager for USA Shooting. I will be leaving in March after nearly three years with USA Shooting and I can honestly say I have had the most incredible experience being a part of this organization. I will never forget the many shooting competitions and events I was lucky enough to attend over the last few years and especially being able to witness our incredible athletes win six Olympic medals in Beijing! The Beijing Olympics will definitely always rank among the best experiences of my life.

I have had the pleasure to get to know many of you during my time here. Working with the athletes, volunteers and all of the members of USA Shooting has been the highlight of my tenure. I sincerely enjoyed my time at USA Shooting and my interactions with all of the amazing people in the shooting community. I am incredibly honored to say that I was able to work for one of the best organizations in the world. I will miss USA Shooting, but I will not be far away and hope to continue to attend the shooting events (as a spectator) in Colorado Springs. Most of you may not recognize me without a camera plastered to my face, but I will still come to cheer on the competitors and say hello to the many people who I have enjoyed working with so much during my time here.

I am happy to say that we have made incredible strides with the magazine in the past couple of years and I know it will only get better from here. I want to thank the USA Shooting staff for all their hard work in making this my job as editor much easier and for all of our members who’ve written articles, submitted photos and given me great suggestions to make the magazine the best it can be. I appreciate everyone’s positive feedback and generosity while I was a part of USA Shooting and I am excited to see what the future has in store for this wonderful sport! Until the next time I see you on the range, good luck and good shooting!
2009 USA Shooting Volunteer of the Year:
Julian Beale III
By Lindsay Brooke, Competitions Manager

Each year devoted parents, friends and shooting enthusiasts from across the nation take time out from their busy schedules to give the ultimate support to USA Shooting. They volunteer their time and energy and share their passion to ensure the growth and development of our sport in the United States. USA Shooting is grateful to have such a strong group of volunteers and we appreciate all of their efforts. In recognition of these outstanding volunteers, we take the time to honor one individual each year that goes above and beyond to help us achieve our mission.

Last year marked Julian Beale's 34th year running the Capital City Jr. Rifle Club in Augusta, Maine. The junior rifle and pistol program in Maine is one of the strongest in the country, driven by a man with a passion for teaching youngsters about marksmanship. Julian, a former rifle shooter, made his first mark when as a student at Coney High School he lobbied for the rifle club team to turn into a varsity sport. Julian went on to serve six years with the U.S. Navy. After his years of service, Julian became passionate about giving back. Then while working at Sears, he asked around to see who had children that might be interested in joining his newly formed Junior Rifle Club. Julian, along with six avid youngsters, equipped with two rifles and a couple jackets would meet on Wednesday nights to practice. To this day, the club still meets on Wednesday nights. Now with 33 junior shooters, many of them represent the second generation of club members. The growth and popularity of the junior programs in Maine has been remarkable. Julian is currently the Junior Director for the Pine Tree State Rifle and Pistol Association and works with subsidiaries such as the 4-H, Boy Scouts and Fish and Game Commission to introduce marksmanship to youth across the state. Their united efforts have introduced the sport of shooting to hundreds of people. Many children will come to a match to watch and see if they might be interested, but within moments of stepping onto the range, Julian has them equipped with the appropriate gear and ready to shoot their first match. After that, the rest is history and the kids are hooked. It is Julian's philosophy that has made the program so successful. It's simple; treat the new shooters the same way you treat your elite. Each shooter has a goal and objective and Julian works to provide each junior shooter with the tools they need to succeed.

Julian's passion and endearing character has left a tender footprint on the hearts of young shooters over the years, not only at the local level, but at the national level as well. Rifle and pistol shooters have fond memories of Julian serving as the Chief Range Officer for the National Junior Olympics for the past 14 years and the Range Director (smallbore) at Camp Perry for the last 25 years. At the National Junior Olympics, you can always find Julian at the range before sunrise. He greets the shooters who depart on the earliest buses to the airport and says his last goodbyes while collecting the dorm keys. Julian Beale is a staple of the Junior Olympic program for USA Shooting and very much a part of each child's experience. We are honored to recognize him as the 2009 USA Shooting Volunteer of the Year.
You know us as competitors. Most of the time you see us on the range firing next to you wearing the black and gold Army colors – our competition uniform. It isn’t very often that you get a glimpse of the other uniform we wear – that of the United States Army serviceman/woman. Whether we’re wearing Class As or the Army Combat Uniform, the United States Army Marksmanship Unit’s (USAMU) soldiers are Army ambassadors connecting to America’s people in various ways: through clinics, competitions, shooting demonstrations, public appearances and print, TV and internet media venues.

The USAMU is unique in that it is the only unit of its kind in the Department of Defense. Our mission statement asserts:

The USAMU enhances the Army’s recruiting effort, raises the standard of the Army’s marksmanship proficiency, and supports the Army’s small arms research and development initiatives in order to raise the Army’s overall combat readiness.

As ambassadors, our dedication, professionalism and expertise instill positive impressions of the Army that may help prospective candidates in their decision to enter the Army. To this end, the USAMU is adding a collegiate award category to the 2010 International Trap and Skeet matches in an attempt to create an increased awareness of the numerous officer/ROTC opportunities available in the United States Army.

The Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) program was established when President Woodrow Wilson signed the National Defense Act in 1916. Since the program’s inception, one-half million officers have received commissions. Women were first commissioned in 1976 and today comprise 20% of the cadet corps. Among the more recognizable names of ROTC graduates are General (ret.) Colin Powell and Mr. Sam Walton, Wal-Mart founder. Both of these individuals are excellent examples of the fact that ROTC training prepares students to succeed in any competitive environment.

The Army ROTC program complements rather than interferes with your college experience. It is an elective curriculum taken concurrent with your required classes. For example, if you’re a nursing student, Army ROTC can enhance your critical-thinking abilities while also providing financial support. A paid, three-week Nurse Summer Training Program assigns cadets in the nursing program to Army hospitals throughout the United States and Germany, offering hands-on training and one-on-one clinical experience.

Army ROTC instills self-confidence, develops leadership skills and promotes a sense of accomplishment in its graduates. With 273 host programs in more than 1,100 schools around the U.S., Puerto Rico and Guam, successful graduates receive a commission as a Second Lieutenant (2LT) in the U.S. Army, the U.S. Army Reserve or the U.S. Army National Guard as well as their college degree.

The availability of scholarships may make attending Army ROTC an easier decision for some students. Four-year college scholarships are attainable for high school students who qualify. If you’ve already started college, you may also qualify for full tuition, depending on your status. Two to four year scholarship options are based on the amount of time remaining required to finish your degree. There’s also an option to choose room and board compensation instead of tuition - again, if you are qualified. Additional allowances may be made for books and fees.

Living expenses may also be provided for each school year and the monthly amount will be based on your Army ROTC level:
- 1st year = $300/month
- 2nd year = $350/month
- 3rd year = $450/month
- 4th year = $500/month

This allowance is also available to all non-scholarship cadets enrolled in the Advanced Course.

Freshman college students start the program by taking an elective Army ROTC Basic Course. If you’re a college student with at least two or more years remaining towards an undergraduate degree, but not enough time to complete the Basic Course, you may opt to enter the Army ROTC Advanced Course by completing the 28-day Leaders’ Training Course (LTC) conducted at Fort Knox, Kentucky during the summer. Completion of the LTC prepares you to return to campus and begin the Advanced Course. Upon completion of that contracting commitment, you may also qualify for a $5,000 bonus.

Another path towards becoming a commissioned Army officer is attending one of the six military colleges in the United States. These are schools where a Corps of Cadets exists, accountability formations are held, physical training is conducted and the cadets wear uniforms. They include North Georgia College and State University (GA), Norwich University (VT), Texas A &M (TX), The Citadel (SC), Virginia Military Institute (VA) and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (VA). The United States Military Academy in West Point, NY also produces commissioned officers but requires a congressional referral on the prospective student’s behalf for admission.

Direct commissions are offered through the Army’s medical, dental, nursing, medical service, medical specialist, veterinary,
chaplain and JAG (Judge Advocate General) Corps and are available to civilians with professional degrees. Rank is determined by the specific career branch. Preliminary requirements for a direct commission are:

- You must be a U.S. citizen.
- You must be a college graduate.
- You must be physically fit (be able to pass the Army Physical Fitness Test and make height/weight standards).
- You must be within the age requirements specified by the career branch (age waivers are considered).

Direct commissions are available into the U.S. Army, the U.S. Army Reserve and the U.S. Army National Guard.

Enrolling in the Army ROTC Basic Course does not require a service commitment unless you’ve received a scholarship. The standard service contract is eight years of either active duty (AD) service or increments of active duty and inactive ready reserve (IRR). Those receiving scholarships can fulfill their commitment with four years AD and four years IRR. Non-scholarship cadets may choose a three-year AD, five-year IRR option. Army Reserve and Army National Guard commissions may be served on a part-time basis while pursuing your civilian career.

Officer branch training may be conducted in one of the following fields: Armor, Aviation, Engineer, Field Artillery, Infantry, Military Police, Dental, JAG, Medical or Veterinary. After completion of your first branch training and a first assignment, you may choose to pursue additional specialized training or post-graduate opportunities. Or, you may find yourself assigned to advanced leadership positions or staff positions in upper management. You could also find yourself helping to develop doctrine, teaching military tactics or serving as an advisor.

The career and life opportunities available to you through the Army conduit are limited only by your imagination. The U.S. Army offers you the training, the experience and possibly even the financial means to access levels of excellence you may have only daydreamed about. Find out how to chart your path to becoming an Army officer by visiting the website at www.goarmy.com/officer. Better yet, pay a visit to your local recruiter or simply talk to a member of the USAMU the next time you see us on the range! In the meantime, remember to Stay Army Strong!

P.S. Stay tuned for upcoming information about Columbus State University’s new rifle, pistol and, yes, SHOTGUN programs! Columbus State University is located in Columbus, GA, practically a stone’s throw from the USAMU ranges on Fort Benning.

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Silvino Lyra is a 1999 USA/NRA International Advanced Shooting Coach who has coached gold and silver medalists at the Pan American Games and 5 Olympians in the 2000 & 2004 Olympic Games in the 10m air pistol element of Modern Pentathlon.
USA Shooting Spotlight Club:  
Texas State Rifle Association

By Adam Sunshine, Competitions Intern

It is only fitting that in the Lone Star State one would find a Texas-sized shooting association like the 42,000-member Texas State Rifle Association (TSRA). The TSRA was established in 1919 for the purposes of supporting and defending the rights of all Texans to own, enjoy and use firearms; providing junior education, competition and hunter education programs; and sponsoring competitive programs for juniors and adults in individual and team shooting sports.

The TSRA became a very successful shooting organization due, in part, to their basic training rifle and pistol courses held year-round and their matches that run from January through April. These programs attract novice and competitive shooters, alike. The TSRA has also benefited from using the local news media to promote their courses, which has resulted in new shooters joining each year.

As a USA Shooting member organization, the TSRA supports international rifle and pistol shooting, in addition to numerous other disciplines. Each discipline has its own director whose job it is to hold various matches within their shooting discipline. Neil Shipley and Brooks Brinson are two of the TSRA’s Junior Olympic rifle and pistol directors.

Shipley has been the TSRA’s Junior Olympic rifle director for the past five years. Some of the matches he has held for the TSRA include the JO 3-Position Air Rifle Championships, the Texas Indoor Smallbore Championship and monthly outdoor rifle matches. He manages to do all of this while also running his own club, Austin County 4-H Shooting Sports.

Shipley believes one of the best features of the TSRA is their “Club in a Box” development program. This program looks to give assistance to new clubs or clubs with financial troubles by giving them various shooting equipment or funds to purchase their own.

Brinson is the director of the association’s Junior Olympic Pistol Club (JOPC). Having been recently elected to the position of JOPC director, Brinson is looking to increase the TSRA’s involvement in JO pistol events. He is committed to holding more organized junior events through the TSRA to increase JO pistol awareness and attract more participants. Despite the challenges that lie ahead, finding time to meet with other JO directors and balancing his time extra between the JOPC and his own Shooting Stars club, Brinson is eager to further develop the JOPC program.

By dedicating their time and effort to train shooters, Shipley and Brinson look to continue to improve the lives of young Texans through the TSRA’s JO program.
Shooter Spotlight: Sam Muegge

By Adam Sunshine, Competitions Intern

No one exemplifies what Shipley and Brinson are trying to accomplish through the TSRA more than Texas shooter Sam Muegge. Muegge has been with the TSRA since 2001. He first began shooting archery, bb-guns and smallbore rifle with his father at age 10.

Now at the age of 17, this up-and-coming shooter has accomplished some impressive results over the past year. At the 2009 JO Championships held in Colorado Springs, Muegge won the men’s prone rifle event and finished as the high J2 in 3-position. He followed this up by taking 2nd overall junior in prone and 5th overall junior in 3-position at Nationals. His recent performances earned him a spot on the USAS National Junior Team this past summer.

While keeping on target, Muegge also excels in the classroom. As a senior at B.F. Terry High School, Muegge will be graduating with Distinguished Honors this May. He is also a member of the National Honor Society, the Future Farmers of America and is the president of his 4-H shooting club. Despite having a lot on his plate, Muegge has found a successful way to balance his shooting and school work.

So what does the future hold for Muegge? He has signed his letter of intent to attend Jacksonville State University in Alabama where he will be a member of the Gamecocks’ rifle team. Muegge is also looking forward to participating in future USAS matches as he aims to follow in the footsteps of shooting idol and fellow Texan Matt Rawlings, and gain a spot on the USAS Team in future world cups and Olympic Games.

Muegge would welcome the honor of representing the United States in international events. When asked what it would mean to be an Olympian, he said it would be a “proud” and “awesome” experience.

Looking at Muegge’s recent accomplishments, USAS has no doubt this young man will, one day, make his country proud.
Statics and Dynamics - Part 1

By JP O'Connor

“That which is Still has Movement.

That which Moves has Stillness.”

Target shooting is a sport rich with varied disciplines and breadth of related topics. Aspects of the sport appeal to engineers and technicians, while other aspects appeal to those who are much more metaphysical in outlook. Some disciplines require a great deal of movement and action, while others require incredible stillness.

Within the Olympic disciplines, there is the stillness of the extreme precision rifle and pistol events on one hand and the rapid, yet precise movements of rapid fire pistol and shotgun. Modern Pentathletes spend most of their time in physically demanding events and then must learn the mental and physical control of precision air pistol. Biathlon athletes face the ultimate contrast: pounding up the hill to the firing line on cross-country skis, then having to draw upon the inner (and external!) calm of the precision rifle athlete.

Even in the “calm” precision events there often is a whole lot of “action” as the athlete works to calm their mind and body… and pounding heart! Just ask a free pistol athlete… or a shotgun athlete facing their next target with 24 hits already recorded.

As we learn and train in our chosen discipline and events there are a great many factors to understand and master. One cannot possibly learn everything at once; much less master every aspect all at the same time. An Olympic champion typically has a journey of eight to ten years or more under their belt. Some journeys are shorter and many are longer.

Because all the various items of information and techniques cannot be mastered at once, we break things down into manageable chunks. For example, we do not start a dialogue on the finer points of trigger control and shot release with an eight-year-old, who is being introduced to shooting for the very first time.

Oftentimes we often fail to link together the disparate pieces of knowledge and technique into a cohesive, comprehensive whole. Instead we have a patchwork – and do not even realize this has happened. This is very frustrating to say the least.

“Everything Affects Everything”

We typically think in static terms, that is, we think about one variable at a time and in a static or fixed mode. This is a natural outcome based on breaking things down into manageable chunks, and especially based on our tendency to deal primarily with what we see before us. In reality, when we shoot there are thousands of variables, many unseen and un-sensed, all changing moment to moment together, much like an orchestra. The trick, of course, is to get all the instruments tuned together, the musicians well trained and all “on the same page” in order to produce beautiful music!

Many athletes have heard, “Everything Affects Everything” during their training. The coach is reminding them that even the simplest of changes can affect more than the one thing they are working to adjust and to be sure to fully evaluate the adjustment. There are no “quick fixes” when striving for ultimate performance.

A common example of one adjustment affecting more than one component is a popular method of adjusting natural point of aim (NPA) when shooting rifle in the standing position. Athletes are taught that one method to adjust their NPA horizontally is to adjust where their back foot is pointing. By making subtle adjustments they can move the NPA to the left or right. Without a doubt, this does have the desired effect and so is commonly taught and used. The challenge is that, whether the coach or athlete realizes, this also affects the athlete’s balance and stability. Those who understand the dual effect know that they have to work everything out so that they get the desired NPA and the optimal balance. Working on one aspect affects the other so this must be taken into account. Despite the stillness of a well optimized standing position, it is a dynamic system, not a static system. Understanding these effects helps an athlete optimize their performance. Be sure to think dynamically in addition to thinking statically.

Shooting Between Heartbeats?

We sometimes read about athletes releasing their shots between heartbeats – most typically in the popular press. Certainly heartbeat is one of many things going on inside our body as we shoot. Can athletes shoot between heartbeats? Do they? Can they “time” the shot to do so? The majority of athletes likely do, whether they know it or not and whether they can actually tell or not. There is a natural internal rhythm that occurs as we shoot that typically results in the shot releasing between the heartbeats without any active “control” or awareness of such on the part of the athlete. Thus, the shot timing between heartbeats is an effect, not an active decision in most cases. This is a hot topic of debate which will not be fully explored here, and there are many varying opinions.

Leaving aside the debatable aspects of the topic, there are interesting aspects to ponder. One Olympic athlete was known for having a very high pulse rate in finals. Her national team coach at the time indicated that her pulse rate was typically 160 beats per minute in finals. Yes, almost three beats a second! She was very consistent and shot many strong finals in her career, including in the Olympics, by trusting her rhythm and ignoring her racing heart rate. With that high rate, one wonders where in the heartbeat cycle her shots actually released.

Many prone specialists, and others, strive for a low resting pulse rate to improve their shooting. This can be beneficial to the majority of shooters, as long as they do not take it too far. An exceedingly low resting pulse rate results in a very large amplitude to each pulse which causes a larger disturbance to the sight
and other movements can be observed and calculated. sway in standing, gun movement, etc.), trigger pressure, and respiration rates, along with body movement (e.g. ing software, real-time instantaneous and averaged heart can easily see both pulse and respiration. With process-

tion caused some shots to be released on the heartbeat and others between heartbeats. This was enough of a difference to affect the shot grouping. Generally it is found that athletes do not provide enough preload on their trigger. This athlete was the opposite and often had too much pressure. Thinking about the problem dynamically led to the connection, in this case, between trigger preload pressure and heartbeat.

Radar

While exploring aspects of heartbeat, discussed above, and gun movement, discussed below, an experiment was performed to explore the possibilities of using remote sensing to measure heart rate, respiration rate and body movement of athletes while in actual competition. To do so, there can be no wires or any physical connection whatsoever between the athlete and the measuring equipment.

Several years ago we took a rifle stock (no barrel or action) and a full shooting kit to a lab in the Georgia Tech Research Institute where Dr. Gene Greneker had a number of interesting remote sensing devices and capabilities. One of the most interesting is his “Radar Flashlight” used by law enforcement and rescue crews to “see” through walls, rubble and other obstacles to find suspects or victims. Another of his devices is an ultra-low power radar, emitting less than a tenth of the amount of energy allowed to leak from microwave ovens at home. Our goal was to explore the feasibility of remote sensing while an athlete was in actual competition. Arranging a shooter in the prone position, the radar was aimed at the shooter’s back. We used prone for this initial exploration to ensure that we could obtain heart and respiration data through the thick shooting clothing. Despite wearing a T-shirt, shooting shirt, sweater and a stiff (nearly new) Sauer canvas shooting jacket, the radar easily picked up the athlete’s heart and respiration movements and body movements. The graph shows a small time slice of raw, unprocessed data when the athlete was very still. One can easily see both pulse and respiration. With processing software, real-time instantaneous and averaged heart and respiration rates, along with body movement (e.g. sway in standing, gun movement, etc.), trigger pressure, and other movements can be observed and calculated.

The exploration proved the viability of the sensing concept and it also provided tangible evidence of the already well understood dynamic nature of the human body, even when seemingly not moving. Time and resources never allowed us to do remote sensing of the athlete with the 160 pulse rate mentioned above. That would have been interesting! With these discussions as background, we now turn to the question of stillness within the dynamic system.

Does The Gun Stop Moving?

A former longtime member of the national team strongly disagreed with a coach’s assertion that the rifle or pistol, when on aim, can seem to momentarily stop for the athlete. “The gun never stops moving!” was the strident, public response. From a purely scientific point of view, this athlete is certainly correct. Regardless of how minute, there are movements taking place. However, that is not the point of the coach’s assertion.

The important aspect of the assertion is the athlete’s perspective, and answering the question, we need to explore additional topics. We will begin there in the next article.

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.
Writing a Training Plan

By David Johnson, National Rifle Coach

Training plans are probably the most talked about, but often most misunderstood tool available to an athlete. A successful training plan simply organizes your training toward achieving a desired goal. A good plan begins with goal setting and prioritization, identification of the related tasks and skills needed to achieve the prioritized goals, determination of your available resources, writing the plan down step by step with the constraints of the resources available and then following up with accountability and review.

**Goal Setting and Prioritization:**
Please visit the Resources/Downloads section of USA Shooting’s website, http://www.usashooting.org/downloads.php under “Coaching” to download and print an excerpt called “U.S. Team Goal Worksheet” from our U.S. Rifle and Pistol Team Training Book developed by National Pistol Coach Sergey Luzov and me. This section focuses on Goal setting (Outcome and related Task/Performance Goals), how to prioritize them and how to start writing them down. One method of determining the tasks you want (and need) to work on is simply by describing the “ultimate” shooter in terms of skills they have and then comparing your skills to them. The “ultimate” shooter may be a composite or mix of several shooting athletes you respect. Evaluate them (and yourself) in the following four skill areas:

**Tactical:** Example—the top prone shooters are able to quickly identify wind conditions and make swift and confident decisions on how to place the next shot (i.e.: shading or not, waiting, clicking, etc).

**Technical:** Example—the top prone shooters have exact positions that they duplicate precisely each time they compete and train.

**Mental:** Example—the top prone shooters know how to get out of trouble if it appears and get back on a high performance track.

**Physical:** Example—the top athletes are physically fit and able to perform in challenging conditions such as high heat.

Do not sweat the exact definitions of the categories above—many overlap and can be discussed several ways—keep your mind on what things you see that top athletes in your sport do very well or seemingly have mastered.

Next, compare your current skills in the categories above to how you see the “ultimate” athlete skill levels. You will typically rate yourself as above, equal to or behind in each of the listed skills.

The skills that you rate yourself as “behind” the ultimate level you have defined are the ones that should jump out as the specific skills you need to work on in a training program.

**Skill to Improve Example:**
The “ultimate” athlete seems to clearly understand how to read the wind and then what to do to shoot successfully in any condition. You rate yourself as pretty good at reading the direction of the wind, but as unsure or hesitant on your reaction to what you read or determine the wind is doing. On the “U.S. Team Goal Worksheet,” you could list “wind skill improvement: I can read direction and speed properly in the next 90 days” as a desired outcome goal. The chart then asks you for three performance or task goals that you must do to achieve the desired outcome. In this example, you might list the following three performance tasks:

- Seek out and study articles and resources that describe wind/conditions reading
- Schedule training and matches over the next 90 days that make me shoot in a variety of wind conditions.
- Seek out a coach or mentor who can help me read conditions and evaluate my progress by next Monday and ask for their assistance and time availability.

If you have gotten this far (chosen a skill to improve and written three things down that will improve the skill) you have completed the most difficult part of writing a training plan. Next you must plan your time towards working on the skills.

First, consider your available resources—and their constraints. Resources are time, range availability and access, school and/or work requirements, social plans, family activities and a host of other items. In the example above, if you only have access to one outdoor range in a two hour driving radius, it may be very unrealistic to plan such an ambitious schedule of range variety shooting. Write your resources down and in particular, focus on the time constraints you must deal with. Also, be sure to consider your non-shooting resources and requirements: family and social time, school and/or work etc.

Second, get out a pencil and a calendar format to write on. Any calendar that has space available to write on will do. School planners work very well in most cases. Start filling in the date blocks with known commitments and any constraints that you have identified. Go as far out in time as you can or have information on. You may already know upcoming match schedules, range access times, school/work requirements, family time for some months in the future. Write them all in.

Third, look at the remaining time available to work on the skills you identified above. At this step, you may have
to evaluate or re-prioritize what you can work on in the time available to you or even how many things you can tackle within the resources you have available.

My rule of thumb is to make sure you take small and manageable steps. In the wind skills example above, it would be unreasonable to expect yourself to be an expert at flag/wind direction reading in one or two training sessions on a range. You may need several sessions on a range just to begin to see the variety a range can present you with. Step one could be setting flags out and asking a mentor to simply help you watch and evaluate what the wind is doing on the range. You could write this in for the first three training sessions available to you. Step two may involve having your mentor test you on what you have learned watching. Step three may have you then doing it from the shooting position while holding and trying to maintain a consistent position. In other words, take it one step at a time before you put all the skills desired together in a test.

**Evaluation and Accountability:**
All successful training plans have regular evaluation points built into them. The evaluation is often a competition, but more useful evaluations test you ahead of the competition. In the wind skills example above, plan a “record day” when your coach can watch and help you evaluate shot by shot if you are seeing and calling the wind correctly on an available range training day. Do this before a formal competition date. After the session, ask the coach what your strong points were and where you need to improve. Based upon that feedback, you can plan your next step in your training plan. You may be on track, or you may need to re-evaluate your initial plan you had written down. A successful plan is flexible enough to be adjusted after the evaluation points.

If you can get through three months of the above procedure you will have learned a tremendous amount about yourself: strengths and areas to improve, plus you will have started to maximize your available resources towards goal achievement. The planning gets much easier after 90 days of actually doing it on paper. You will become instantly better at planning your time and evaluating your progress—which leads you to better use of your time and resources—the whole purpose of a training plan!
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We all have weaknesses in our shooting, perhaps in our physical technique or the mental game. The first step in turning weaknesses into strengths is to identify specific problems. That self-assessment may be difficult because we often want to believe we are perfect or are already working on our flaws. But since no one is perfect, I encourage you to make an honest evaluation and find that weakness.

The first thing I do to determine which aspect of my shooting needs work is to sit down and methodically evaluate my shooting. Break down every facet of your shooting, including the technical, mental and physical elements. Do this after every practice. Like me, perhaps you've discovered your weakness surfaces in actual matches. If matches or training reveal more than one weakness, you must determine which one needs work first. Generally, I choose the one that will help my shooting the most in the long run.

Once you have determined the weakness, get creative and inventive; remember, we're trying to turn that weakness into a strength. Don't hesitate to experiment with new training drills, or even rewrite your training plan. You're a serious shooter, so I know you're willing to put in the time and effort to develop or seek out drills specifically designed to overcome a weak area. If you need help getting started, talk to your coach or an experienced shooter.

Physical weaknesses are generally the easiest to identify and improve upon, so let me start with an example in my own shooting. Not long ago, I separated my left (shooting) shoulder in a farming accident. It took six weeks to heal—a long time to be off the gun. Not only was my arm weak from not shooting for six weeks, but the injury also healed incorrectly. I completely rewrote how I trained. Before the injury I had a very solid hold; afterward, my hold was just plain weak. I wondered how I could improve my hold and what training tools I could use to speed the recovery process physically, technically and even mentally.

First, I really thought about how I want my shooting to “feel.” I mentally worked through my entire technical process—from on the bench, to the approach, to the hold. My next consideration focused on the physical element: How was I going to get back my solid hold? I developed my own holding exercise workout sheet, which turned out to be my most helpful exercise. I visited a chiropractor who also worked with a physical therapist. I explained my desired end-state, and we developed a very productive workout routine that greatly aided the recovery process. I know hard work was the key to recovery, but I also had to “believe” I could improve—a mental approach that helped immensely.

If your weakness is in the mental game, don't hesitate to seek out a sports psychologist. If that's not possible, visit your local library and peruse a sports psychology book that addresses your problem. The most common example of a mental area that you can strengthen becomes evident when your match scores are noticeably lower than your practice scores. Are you addressing that problem? You're not likely to reverse that trend until you identify specific areas to improve, and then develop specific drills or training habits designed to strengthen your match mentality.

Very often, weaknesses are both physical and mental. An unhealthy diet, for example, involves a physical problem that takes mental strength to improve. Changing an unproductive habit or lifestyle is never easy, but necessary if you want to be great. I struggle with this one. It's difficult to substitute water for soda at meals, but something I must do if I want a solid hold—the caffeine in soda really degrades my hold. But remember, you can't just change a bad habit two weeks before a match; we must build productive training patterns and healthy behaviors for as long as we are competing seriously.

Now for the fun part: After you've turned your weaknesses into strengths, try your “new” shooting approach in a competition. Hopefully, your training and hard work has paid off. If so, continue to evaluate your strengths and weaknesses. If not, don't be discouraged—just determine a new course of action and get to work. I am still working on weaknesses everyday. I have talked to some of the best shooters in the world and they are still working on improving their weaknesses as well; to reach our potential we must work every day. It is hard work indeed, but for shooters who are motivated and determined, it's necessary and even enjoyable!
The Natural Point of Aim (NPA). The prone and kneeling positions both have an easily identifiable point of aim, thanks to the support the rifle receives from the sling. In the standing position, however, the rifle wavers much more, and the point of aim is more accurately described as an area of hold.

To find your Natural Point of Aim, you should assume a correct position and dry fire a few shots to ensure your muscles are relaxed and you have obtained your normal shooting position. When you feel the position has stabilized enough to take a sighting shot, begin the process of finding the Natural Point of Aim.

Pick up the rifle and close the bolt just as if you are ready to shoot the first shot, but don’t load the rifle. Assume your normal standing position placing the rifle into your shoulder, your cheek on the stock, your finger on the trigger and use your normal breathing pattern. Look through your sights and obtain the proper sight picture. When you get to the point of holding your breath, close your eyes. Moving from the line of fire your barrel is making to the target, force the rifle to the right of the line of fire three inches at the muzzle and then pull the rifle to the other side of the original line of fire about three inches. This is a maximum movement at the muzzle of six inches. This sets up a rocking motion, all the while keeping your eyes shut. When the rifle stops moving, open your eyes and wherever the rifle is pointing represents your true Natural Point of Aim. If the rifle aiming point is off the bullseye and you have to force the rifle to line up with the bullseye, you are using muscular effort to achieve the correct aiming point, and muscling or forcing the rifle to the aiming point is not fundamentally correct.

When you open your eyes you probably find that the rifle is not pointed at the bullseye. You then make whatever position and foot movement changes are necessary, which you believe

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will change the Natural Point of Aim to be on target. Then re-
peat the process as many times as necessary until you find the
 correct position and foot placement to obtain a Natural Point of
Aim that is on the bullseye.

One way your body achieves stability is from the visual sig-
nals you perceive and send to the brain; these signals are visual
reference points. If your eyes remain open, your brain processes
those signals and sends messages to the muscle groups to hold
your body in position. Thus, your body is probably not attain-
ing the true point of aim. Having your eyes open lessens the po-
tential for letting your senses go blank. In order for you to lose
those visual reference points, and find your real Natural Point of
Aim, make certain your eyes are closed.

Some coaches claim you can simply look away rather than
closing your eyes; however, actual practice has shown that many
shooters end up turning their heads away, thus negating the en-
tire process. Closing the eyes is the best way to eliminate the
visual reference points.

Depending on the skill level of a shooter, that athlete may
not be able to keep the bullseye in the front aperture. However,
the object of the exercise is to get the front aperture as close as
possible to the bullseye while maintaining a constant position.

The mind also keys on certain physical reference points, one
of which is the target. Of course, that reference point is nec-
essary for you to get in position initially prior to initiating the
Natural Point of Aim exercise. Other visual references include
lines you see vertically such as the scope stand, wall columns,
wall seams and target frames. We closed our eyes to lose the
visual reference point. We move the rifle three inches to the
right and pull the rifle three inches to the left of the initial line
of fire setting up the rocking motion to erase the initial physical
reference point.

The positions we shoot with will settle as we fire our targets,
whether in training or competition. It is important to initiate
the Natural Point of Aim exercise at least once in the middle of
your course of fire to ensure you continue to have the correct
Natural Point of Aim and are not forcing the rifle on the target
or causing tension by using muscles unnecessarily.

You should utilize this process in each position. Some shoot-
ers do it when switching from one side of a 10-bull target to
the other. If you’re shooting at two 10-bull targets adjacent to
each other, it is essential to go through the process when moving
from one target to the next.

Ernest (Ernie) Vande Zande is a former World Record Holder of the Men’s 60
Shot Prone course of fire. He was the manager of Olympic Training Center Shoot-
ing Sports Programs from 1982-1988. He was the project manager for design and
construction of the U.S. Olympic Shooting Center as well as acquisition of the
Fort Carson land utilized for USAS outdoor shooting ranges.

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Hill Country Shooting Sports Center, 2009 Fall Selection Match: It was a High-four-double . . . or it was a snake. As that screaming target dived toward the deck, 2008 Olympian Sean McLelland picked it up visually, smoothly went down with it and smoked it two feet above the ground and three feet from the field boundary. Good thing: He needed that target to make the 2010 World Shooting Championship Skeet Team.

Several observers in the crowd whispered, “sporting clays shooter!” I smiled; I knew the real reason McLelland hit the target is because he’s a tough, tough competitor, and he’s willing to prepare for the contingencies that pop up during a competition . . . such as wind-blown targets that look more like orange garden hoses on the lawn than fat cantaloupes lofted through the hoop. Good thing: He needed that target to make the 2010 World Shooting Championship Skeet Team.

But what if you’re not a sporting clays shooter? And what if you want to gain that target-breaking ability? You can learn to hit those targets with some smart preparation and a willingness to work (see my article in this issue, “W.O.R.K.” page 31). Before you go cranking down the angles on your throwing machines, however, let me explain an important athletic training concept that you can apply to several elements of your shooting. That concept is called “variation,” and it’s critical to athletes whose sport involves fine motor skills or who need to make adjustments in their routine skills, such as shooting a fast-moving clay target. In essence, variation in training forces the athlete to develop the skills necessary to deal with unusual conditions or movements and provides the athlete with a broader, more useful “muscle memory” for performing an athletic skill. If an athlete routinely shoots at targets that are lower or higher than normal, that athlete has developed the skill to “shoot them wherever they are” as a result of variation training.

A shooter who uses variation in training will develop a corresponding proficiency called “modulation.” Modulation is simply the increased ability to control the muscle response in a certain skill, or “modulate” the actions of a muscle (or muscle group) as appropriate to perform the skill correctly. Don’t worry about the phraseology; just focus on the basic point: If you are able to adjust your actions to the existing conditions, you’ll be a better shooter.

So when Sean McLelland’s High-four-double turns into a San Juan Capistrano swallow and zooms toward Mother Earth with a death wish, Sean’s variation in training allows him to modulate his swing so he moves smoothly to the target and then punches his ticket to the World Championships. No panic, no guesswork, no luck; just a purposeful move that is way more skill than surprise.

OK, NOW go crank down the angles on your throwing machine. But be smart about it. (Trap shooters, I’ll also address your game below). First, set your targets through the hoop according to regulation. Then crank down the high house target so it flies through the bottom of the hoop, or perhaps even just a few inches below the hoop. Then go right to station five and shoot a few high house targets, and then spend a lot more time shooting pairs there—perhaps 10 or 12 pairs. Now slide over to station four and follow the same pattern. Then go to stations six, seven and eight. Once you’ve worked through those stations, try a regulation round starting at station one. I do NOT recommend shooting a regulation round right after you lower the angle of the target—too many different looks to deal with at first.

Now here’s an important concept to remember: Keep that unusual angle long enough that you learn how to shoot it, but not so long that it becomes your new “groove.” How long a period is that? It varies from shooter to shooter, but I rec-
Disciplines

ommend that you blend in that variation about every other practice session. Once you become more accustomed to variation and your modulation develops more quickly, then try throwing in an adjustment on the low house target. Before you know it, you'll be shooting low high-house targets, high low-house targets and everything in between. Try setting them both low, and then both high, but be sure to go back to “home” frequently enough that true modulation occurs.

When I was really chasing the game as a competitive shooter, I'd include variations in every practice session, and even set up adjoining skeet fields with different “schemes” to mix it up as much as possible. I’d switch from one field to the other, essentially creating a “wobble skeet” scenario that helped me become very adaptable to whatever angle came out of the window. That gave me the confidence I needed when I went to a strange field for a match, or when the wind kicked up, or when the target simply flew in a way I didn't expect. And yes, I punched a few World Championship Team tickets myself by hitting those boundary-bouncing worm-burners . . .

Trap shooters: Crank away! Don't vary every target; perhaps start with one per post or maybe even just one or two per scheme. Since all the schemes in trap offer a very wide range of angles, heights, distances and surprises, your variation might be more useful if you change the speed of the targets instead of the angles. Put in a few cranks on the spring (and/or back off a few cranks) after you’ve set the scheme for regulation targets.

Double-Trappers: The same concept applies in your game. Start by varying one target, and then expand to both targets as your skills develop and your ability to modulate becomes stronger.

Some of you may be thinking ahead already . . . you're wondering if you can adjust the speeds (faster or slower), or adjust the angles relative to the centerline (inside the stake, or outside the stake) or any combination of those variations. Of course you can! However, use moderation and method in your variations. Vary those elements only to the degree that your skills can modulate and “keep up” with the changes. If you attempt to mix in too many changes too quickly, you’re likely to face frustration and confusion rather than progress.

Warning: Some very experienced coaches may not support your efforts to add variation in training. They may still be in the school of thought that believes you must repeat exactly the same action over and over, tens of thousands of times to establish the muscle memory necessary to perform perfectly. Unfortunately, that theory has been steamrolled by dozens and dozens of sport science studies, field tests and . . . Sean McLellands. I'll concede, repeating the same action has its place in establishing fundamental skills, but to grow beyond rudimentary actions into more purposeful skills that can carry you to elite performances, you simply must expand your skill set by challenging yourself with variation. Try it!

Of course, there are numerous ways you can add variation to your training. You can adjust the targets as discussed above, but you can also vary your hold points, break points, timing, lighting conditions, etc., etc. But start with the simple variations I discussed above, and then push yourself to more challenging scenarios as your ability to modulate improves.

As your ability to modulate improves your scores will also improve, and your confidence—unlike the dive-bombing devils you’ve been chasing on station four—will skyrocket like a springing teal. Now that's something Sean McLellan—and a whole lot of sporting clays shooters—knows something about. So if you'll sprinkle some variation and modulation into your training, you'll soon have something over those nasty targets you’ve been seeking all along: Domination.

“...focus on the basic point: If you are able to adjust your actions to the existing conditions, you’ll be a better shooter.”
2009 Winter Airgun Championships
2009 Winter Airgun Championships

By Mary Beth Vorwerk
Over 260 rifle and pistol airgun shooters from across the United States, as well as 40 athletes from 11 countries around the world gathered at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo., December 4-6, 2009 to compete at the 2009 USA Shooting Winter Airgun Championships (formerly known as 3 X Air).

This three-day event served as a minimum qualifying score (MQS) qualifier for the first-ever Youth Olympic Games, which will be held August 14-26, 2010 in Singapore. The MQS qualifier for the Youth Olympic Games was for non-U.S. competitors only as the U.S. will not be participating in the shooting events at the Youth Olympic Games.

The 2009 Winter Airgun Championships was also a U.S. team tryout for 2010 ISSF World Cups, the 2010 World Championships (part I) and the Bavarian Airgun Championships in the Air Pistol and Air Rifle Events.

Identical competitions took place in rifle and pistol with finals matches closing out each day of competition at the Winter Airgun Championships.

Day One: Matt Emmons, Sarah Scherer Shoot Perfect Scores

On the first day of competition at the 2009 Winter Airgun Championships, two-time Olympic medalist Matt Emmons (Browns Mills, N.J.) and Sarah Scherer (Forth Worth, Texas) both shot perfect match scores and claimed the first day titles for rifle. Three-time Olympian Daryl Szarenski and Teresa Meyer each captured first place for pistol.

Emmons entered the Men’s 10m Air Rifle final with a perfect score of 600 and shot 103.3 points in the final round to capture the day one title with an overall score of 703.3. U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit (USAMU) member Matt Rawlings (Wharton, Texas) grabbed second place with 699.1 total points. Jonathan Hall (Carrollton, Ga.) finished one tenth of a point behind Rawlings in third place with 699.0. Michael Kulbacki (DuBois, Pa.), who is part of the number one ranked West Virginia University rifle team, took first place for the junior men with 691.8 total points. University of Nevada’s Dempster Christenson (Sioux Falls, S.D.) finished close behind Kulbacki in second place with 691.6, while 2008 Olympian Stephen Scherer (Fort Worth, Texas) claimed the third spot with 689.6.

In Men’s Pistol, USAMU member Daryl Szarenski (Saginaw, Mich.) captured the Day One title with a match score of 574, a final score of 101.4 for an overall total of 675.4 points. Brian Beaman (Selby, S.D.), a 2008 Olympian, took second place with 672.6, while 2008 Olympic
brass medalist Jason Turner (Rochester, N.Y.) finished in third place overall with 670.8 points. Will Brown (Twin Falls, Idaho) won the Junior Men's Pistol title by 13.6 points, after firing a total score of 666.7, while Matthew Pueppke (Amenia, N.D.) finished second with 653.1 points. Jack Dutoit (Arlington, Texas) claimed third place with 651.9.

Eighteen-year-old Sarah Scherer of the Texas Christian University rifle team grabbed the title for Women's 10m Air Rifle after shooting a perfect match score of 400 points, a final of 103.4 for a total score of 503.4. Jamie Beyerle (Lebanon, Pa.), a 2008 Olympian, finished in second place with 500.9 points and two-time Olympian Emily Caruso (Fairfield, Conn.) grabbed the third spot with 499.4 points. Scherer also took first place for the junior women with 502.8 points, while Abigail Stanec (Wadsworth, Ohio) finished second with 496.9 and TCU's Sarah Beard (Danville, Ind.) earned the third spot with 495.8.

Teresa Meyer (Dearborn, Mich.) earned the top spot in Women's Pistol, finishing with an overall score of 472.1 points. Pan American gold medalist Sandra Uptagrafft (Phenix City, Ala.) took second with 469.5 and Courtney Anthony (Lexington, Neb.) grabbed third place with 465.5 points. Anthony also took home the junior title with a score of 470.5, while Hannah Lewis (Colorado Springs, Colo.) claimed the second spot with 464.1 points and Kylie Gagnon (Bozeman, Mont.) finished third place with 460.1 points.

Day Two: Emmons, Szarenski, Scherer and Uptagrafft Claim Top Spots

Matt Emmons and Sarah Scherer each won first place in rifle again on the second day of competition, while Daryl Szarenski and Sandra Uptagrafft took home the titles in pistol.

Emmons captured the Men's 10m Air Rifle title for the second day in a row, firing a match score of 598, an excellent final of 104.6 for an overall score of 702.6 points. Michael Kulbacki grabbed second place with 697.3 total points. U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit (USAMU) member Joe Hein (Phenix City, Ala.) took third with a total score of 696.9.

Kulbacki also won the Junior Men's Air Rifle title for the second consecutive day after finishing with 696.7 total points. Kulbacki's WVU teammate Andy Lamson (Colchester, Vt.) took second place with 691.5, while Stephen Scherer claimed the third spot for the second day in a row with 689.9 points.

Daryl Szarenski took home the Men's Air Pistol title for the second consecutive day after shooting a match score of 578,
a final of 99.7 for a total score of 677.7. Brian Beaman took second place for the second day in a row with an overall score of with 676.6, points and Cody Owseley (Tonganoxie, Kan.) finished in the third spot with 673.2 points. Will Brown won his second Junior Men’s Pistol title of the Winter Airgun match, after firing a total score of 669.9 points which was over 20 points ahead of second place finisher Jack Dutoit, who fired a total score of 649.3. Matthew Pueppke finished in third place for the second day with 647.6 total points.

Sarah Scherer claimed the title in Women’s 10m Air Rifle for the second consecutive day after shooting 399 points in the qualification, which is one point away from the perfect 400 points she shot on day one of the match. Scherer fired 103.3 points in the final to end up in first place with a total of 502.3 points. Emily Caruso earned second place with 501.9 points, while Meghann Morrill (Charlot-tesville, Va.) took third place with 499.3. Scherer also took first place for the junior women with 501.5 total points. University of Kentucky’s Megan English (Boulder, Colo.) finished second with 496.6 and Sarah Beard earned the third spot again for the junior women with 496.0 points.

In Women’s Pistol, Sandra Uptagrafft shot her way to the top spot with a qualification score of 372, a final of 99.4 for an overall score of 471.4 points. Day One Champion Teresa Meyer earned second place with 470.2 total points and Courtney Anthony grabbed third place for the second day in a row with a total score of with 468.7 points. Anthony also took home the junior title for the second consecutive day with a score of 468.4, while Hannah Lewis claimed second place with 464.4 points and Kelsey Imig (Westminster, Mass.) earned third place with a total score of 456.4.

Day Three: Competition Concludes with Emmons, Turner, Beard and Uptagrafft Capturing Titles

The 2009 Winter Airgun Championships came to a close with Matt Emmons, Jason Turner, Sarah Beard and Sandra Uptagrafft claiming the top spots on day three of the competition.

Matt Emmons was three for three at the Winter Airgun Championships, winning the Men’s Air Rifle title all three days of the match. Emmons shot a near perfect qualification score of 599 out of 600 points on the third day, followed by a final of 102.5 to end in first place with 701.5 total points. Matt Rawlings finished in second place with 700.6 points and Jonathan Hall took the third spot with 700.3 points. For the ju-
nior men, Dustin Chesebro (Laramie, Wyo.) of the University of Alaska-Fairbanks took home the title with 698.3 total points after shooting an outstanding final score of 104.3. Michael Kulbacki finished in second place with 694.5, while Dempster Christenson earned third place with 692.8 points.

In Men's Pistol, Jason Turner entered the final in first place with a match score of 580. Turner shot 99.7 points in the final and kept his lead to finish in first place overall with 679.7 points. Brian Beaman finished the match right behind Turner in second place overall for the third consecutive day with a total score of 679.5 points. USAMU member Greg Markowski (Addison, Texas) landed on the podium in third place with 673.3 points. Will Brown captured his third Junior Men's Pistol title of the match when he finished in first place easily with 663.2 points. Blake Reburn (Kensington, Md.) took second with 646.4, while Jacob Hall (Carrollton, Ga.) finished in third place with 634.7.

In a very close match in the Women's Air Rifle event, Sarah Beard pulled out the win after shooting a near perfect qualification score of 399 points, an excellent final of 104.1 for an overall score of 503.1 points. Emily Caruso also shot a match score of 399, a final of 103.2 and finished in second place with 502.2 total points. Jamie Beyerle shot a perfect match score of 400 points and ended up right behind Caruso in third place after shooting 102.1 points in the final for a total of 502.1 points. Sarah Scherer took first place for the junior women for the third consecutive day, firing a 399 qualification score and 104.2 in the final for a total of 503.2 points. Beard grabbed second place for the junior women with 501.4 total points, while Emily Quiner (Brooklyn Park, Minn.) earned third place with 496.3 points.

Sandra Uptagrafft earned the top spot in Women's Pistol once again after shooting a match score of 380, a final of 96.5 for an overall score of 476.5 points. Teresa Meyer finished in second place for the second day in a row with a total score of 470.1, while Courtney Anthony grabbed third place for the third consecutive day with 466.7 points. Hannah Lewis earned the top spot for the junior women with 470.5 total points. Starlin Shi (Potomac, Md.) finished second with 450.4 and Kathryn Kananen (Florissant, Colo.) took third place with 448.7.

For complete Winter Airgun Championship results, please visit USA Shooting’s website at www.usashooting.org.

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On The Complex

By Robert Mitchell, Chief Executive Officer

Looking back, 2009 was indeed a busy and exciting post-
Olympic year. Looking forward, a full 2010 calendar offers ex-
citing times as well.

Throughout 2009 the United States Olympic Committee
(USOC) was constantly in the news. Chicago offered a truly
outstanding 2016 Olympic bid, including support by our na-
tion's President. Unfortunately, the excitement turned to disap-
pointment when Chicago was eliminated in the first round. But
with the hiring of Scott Blackmun as the USOC’s new CEO, the
Olympic family is once again hopeful for brighter days ahead.
Scott’s Olympic experience includes serving as USOC General
Council and as acting CEO in 2001. During Scott’s prior USOC
stint, he gained the respect of the National Governing Bodies,
staff and athletes alike. He is most capable of leading the USOC
and regaining the stature it deserves.

Our athletes achieved great success at international events,
winning 21 medals in ISSF World Cup and World Cup Final
competitions. Leading that charge was Keith Sanderson, who
won three medals in Men’s Rapid Fire pistol. First-time medal
winners include Caitlin Conner, Rachel Heiden, Ryan Hadden
and Amber English, proving the success of our development
program.

Gary Anderson took the reigns as USAS President at the
March Board meeting. Gary certainly needs no introduction--
no one who has done more for the Olympic shooting sports the
past 40 years. Gary’s semi-retirement from the Civilian Marks-
manship Program will allow him to spend more time with both
USAS and the ISSF.

Last year also saw the launch of the USA Shooting Team
Foundation (USASTF), whose objective is to provide financial
support for USAS. The USASTF has a small but most capable
board with Chairman Ron Schauer, and directors Bob Coyle,
Steve Scott, Pete Brownell and Buddy DuVall. The USASTF will
work in close harmony with USAS to accomplish our mutual
goals.

Other significant 2009 activities include the formation of
our Paralympic shooting program. Bob Foth transitioned from
Manager of Youth Development and Coaching to the National
Paralympic Coach. While a steep learning curve remains, we
expect to become a leader in both performance and manage-
ment of Paralympic activities.

While the economy suffered in 2009, participation in USAS
competitions reached new highs and included more seniors and
juniors. In fact, the higher participation in the Trap event at our
National Championships resulted in long days on the range. As
a result, Trap will take place over four competition days in 2010.

The bi-annual continuing education Coach College took
place at the Olympic Complex in October and received excellent
reviews. Plan to join us for the same event in 2011!

As 2009 came to a close, our direct marketing fundraising re-
bounded, producing excellent year-end results. We very much
appreciate and thank the donors who support our mail appeals.
Our frequent campaigns find your mail box regularly, but please
realize your contributions are critical to the success of our pro-
gram. Though the economy and world humanitarian efforts
impact our fundraising, we’re grateful for the donors who help
sustain the long-term success of our sport.

Our Board identified “Building the Athlete Pool” as a critical
success factor. Toward that end we expanded our Resident Ath-
lete Program to 31 shooters. This significant commitment by
the athletes and USAS staff will build for the future and sustain
competitive international excellence. We will continually work
to grow participation and enhance our events. We also strive
to bolster youth shooting programs such as Three-Position Air
Rifle, Progressive Position Pistol, SCTP and others. For athletes
with the Olympic dream, we want to make that path available
and clear.

USAS will host an ISSF World Cup at Fort Benning, Ga., in
May, a path we’ve been down before. However, a twist in the
road this time is our partnership with the Columbus Conven-
tion and Visitor’s Bureau to provide local transportation. Ad-
ditionally, Valley Hospitality Corporation will provide substan-
tial support including Hilton food service, office trailers and an
opening ceremony reception. These new relationships should
make this World Cup our finest ever.

The U.S. enjoys more representation and influence within the
ISSF than ever, and in July eight of our USAS representatives
will vie for re-election in the ISSF General Assembly. The 50th
World Shooting Championships—the largest ever—will follow
directly in Munich, Germany, widely considered the birthplace
of our sport. Olympic quota places will be available at these
championships, and we expect the competition to be as tough as
ever. I know our athletes will be up for the challenge.

Another highlight of 2010 will be the Championship of the
Americas in Rio de Janeiro in November. This continental
championship is held once a quadrennial and also offers the op-
portunity to win Olympic quota places.

2009 was a busy and rewarding year with 2010 offering even
more. Be involved and enjoy our Olympic shooting sports!

“We will continually work to grow participation and
enhance our events.”

exciting times
Paralympic Shooting Update
By Bob Foth, National Paralympic Coach

U.S. Paralympic shooters finished 2009 with great results at the Winter Airgun Championships at the Colorado Springs Olympic Training Complex (OTC). Dan Jordan, a 2004 Paralympic silver medalist, made the biggest statement with his return to competition after a five-year break. His 597 standing on Day two was truly a world class score that would likely win a medal in any competition. Dan coaches the University of Alaska-Fairbanks Rifle Team, and we are all excited to have him back! It was also great to see several other shooters with disabilities competing at that match. A strong contingent from the Shepherd Center in Atlanta competed well, as did Mike Dickey from Lakeshore Foundation in Birmingham, Ala. Mike made his first international final in Spain this year and has joined us as a Resident Athlete.

U.S. shooters finished 2009 with a total of eight international medals and 12 “finals” in only 15 starts, led by Josh Olson with four medals (two gold) followed by Eric Hollen and Danielle Fong with two medals each.

We certainly need to continue to grow the athlete base and provide great training and matches for all of our shooters. 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.

This year has started at full speed, with my first meeting as a member of the NRA’s Shooters with Disabilities Committee meeting, a training session here at the OTC, a trip to SHOT Show and a trip to ELEY to match ammo to barrels of team members, all in January. No let up later in the year either. OTC matches will include the Rocky Mountain Rifle Championships in February and the Winter Airgun Match in December. Our top shooters plan to continue their momentum into international matches in Turkey, Germany, France, Spain and Great Britain and our World Championships in Zagreb in July. We also hope to run an international invitational match in the U.S. at the end of the year that could include training programs for classifiers and officials. We will also host shooting events at the first ever Warrior Games, a multi-sport event at the OTC in May. Numerous camps and clinics are planned as well for various Wounded Warrior groups and the best shooters from NRAs Disabled Sectional Match series.

The U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit (USAMU) also has plans to grow their Paralympic program. Josh Olson currently trains there and has been part of the World Class Athlete Program. Numerous sources also provide training and support for disabled athletes interested in sport. Eric Hollen hopes to start a program at East Tennessee State University (ETSU) and coaches at Michigan State also are interested in developing a Para shooting program.

Detailed information about Paralympic Shooting is available on the International Shooting Committee for the Disabled (ISCD) website at: http://shootonline.org/

For a complete schedule of events in your area visit www.usashooting.org
Go to the competitions drop down and click on the Interactive Map
Click on your state or surrounding states to find local competitions
W.O.R.K

By Bill Roy, Director of Operations/High Performance Director

I didn't think she really knew the meaning of the word when she used it the day she won the gold medal as a 16-year old at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia.

But now four-time Olympic medalist Kim Rhode has proven to be the preeminent expert on the topic: W-O-R-K . . . WORK. So when Kim proclaimed that she wouldn't be denied her gold medal because she worked so long and hard and she absolutely believed her work would pay off, indeed she knew what she was talking about.

Hard work. Long work. Intense work. And smart work. Round after round, day after day for months and years: The most decorated Olympic shooter in our country's history simply knows how to work.

All the great ones do. Michael Jordan, Derek Jeter, Mia Hamm, Peyton Manning . . . Matt Emmons and Vinny Hancock. First on the field, last off. Push to their limits, and then push some more. Fight for an edge, claw for a single point, scrap for the barely-perceptible separation that makes the difference between good and great.

And they love every minute of it.

What about you, my friend? I know you're ready to try hard, but are you willing to work hard? I mean really wring it out for the long haul, leave no stone unturned, feel the burn and every our athletes, has a stringent regimen of mental training, physical conditioning, training plan reviews and head sessions with our National Coaches and the other athletes. It's go go go, and work work work.

And they love every minute of it.

How do we motivate them? Heck, they motivate us! I'm extremely pleased (and grateful) for the way they've pulled together, pushed forward and raised the standard of excellence on the property of USA Shooting. Skeet shooter Frank Thompson has trekked the arc of our skeet field so many times he's worn a footpath from station one to station seven, and yet he still pops his head into our offices about twice a week to see how he can help us. Amy Sowash, a rising star in the rifle ranks, is another first-in-last-out range rat who still finds time to work with our National Training Center Junior Club. And Nick Budnella, a tough-as-nails competitor in air pistol, has done so much fixing and welding for us that I'm sure some of our tourists mistake him for a maintenance worker. If they do, they'll have part of it correct: He certainly is a worker.

There's something refreshing about a little sweat. I like to see the effort of muscles bulging and veins popping every once in a while, but I absolutely love to see the deep exhale and telling shoulder sag of an athlete who is just plain tired, or even exhausted after a challenging training session that would cause you or me to pop our head off the stock or have our index finger spazzing as if it were on the trigger of a clogged water gun. Work, work, work.

Every once in a while a sponsor, or group of Olympic supporters, or coach from another sport will stop by our building for a little tour. I'll show them our twin 50 meter indoor ranges (the largest in the country), and our state of the art electronic targets. I'll brag about our newly-developed online membership system or parade them by our brimming trophy cases. But if I really want to impress them, if I really want to convey the deepest sense of the Olympic spirit and have them feel the tangible sense of crisp American pride, I'll pull out the Big Guns--I'll take them to the range windows and let them admire the hardest working athletes on the Olympic Training Complex: Our shooting team members. That's what I show them.

And they love every minute of it.

"Hard work. Long work. Intense work. And smart work. Round after round, day after day for months and years: The most decorated Olympic shooter in our country's history simply knows how to work."
USA Shooting is pleased to announce that the long awaited air pistols from Air Arms are available to all USAS members and are ready to ship. These compressed air pistols are relatively lightweight (1.9 lbs) and rear-balanced, with the air cylinder inside the ambidextrous grip. The sights are fully adjustable with a three-sided front sight and four rear sight notch widths. Sight clicks are approximately 3 per scoring ring. The trigger also has several adjustment screws and an adjustable shoe and can be set to dry fire. The accurate barrel is encased in a blue sleeve with integrated compensator and rail guide for an accessory weight (included). Designed as a moderately priced youth pistol, these great features and adjustable weight allow the gun to grow with the athlete.

The introductory price is currently only $525 (plus shipping and handling). Contact Nichole Rae for more information at nichole.rae@usashooting.org or (719) 866-4743.

A special fill adapter tube is needed and is available for an additional $20. Groups placing multiple pistol orders may choose to order fewer fill adapters than pistols. USAS will also continue to offer a two year time payment plan for USAS clubs ordering 3 or more pistols. Customers will pay $110 per pistol initially and four more payments of $110 every six months.

Shooters are among the most decorated athletes in U.S. Olympic history. Many say a background in hunting influences their success. In recognition of this connectivity, the entire USA Shooting Team has been named honorary chair of National Hunting and Fishing Day for 2010.

Always the fourth Saturday in September, this year’s celebration is set for Sept. 25.

Congress established National Hunting and Fishing Day to recognize hunters and anglers for their leadership in fish and wildlife conservation. Since launching in 1972, the day has been formally proclaimed by every U.S. President and countless governors and mayors.

“We’re excited to work with the USA Shooting Team to show how American hunters and anglers are world-class conservationists, and how successes afield can translate to world-class athletes,” said Denise Wagner, who coordinates the annual NHF Day celebration on behalf of Wonders of Wildlife.

As the official home of NHF Day, Wonders of Wildlife museum in Springfield, Mo., coordinates public education and awareness campaigns for traditional outdoor sports.

With 103 Olympic medals for rifle, pistol and shotgun marksmanship, the U.S. excels in few sports more than shooting. Only track and field, swimming, diving, wrestling and boxing have been more prolific medal producers for Americans. In fact, shooting ranks ahead of gymnastics, figure skating, volleyball and more than 30 other Olympic sports.

Most members of the current USA Shooting Team are active hunters and anglers, continuing long traditions of passion for the outdoors and winning on the world stage.

“Hunting, especially, continues to have considerable impact on many members of the team. They say hunting instilled an interest in firearms and taught basic marksmanship, patience, discipline and other assets to competitive skills,” said Buddy DuVall, marketing director for USA Shooting, the national governing body for Olympic shooting sports.

He added, “We are honored to give something back to the sportsmen and women of America by serving for National Hunting and Fishing Day.”

The USA Shooting Team joins a long list of sports personalities who have served as honorary chair of NHF Day. Baseball stars have included Ron Guidry, Tom Seaver, George Brett and Wade Boggs. Football pros Bert Jones, Terry Bradshaw, John Riggins and Jay Novacek, along with golfers Tom Weiskopf, Johnny Miller, Arnold Palmer and Tom Lehman have also served. Basketball legend John Havlicek, NASCAR’s Ward Burton and tennis champion Roscoe Tanner round out the sports heroes who have helped spread the word about hunting, angling and conservation.

The growing list of sponsors for NHF Day 2010 includes Wonders of Wildlife, National Shooting Sports Foundation, Bass Pro Shops, Smith & Wesson, Sportsman Channel, Realtree, Cabela’s, GunBroker.com and Yamaha.

For more information, visit www.nhfday.org.
USA Shooting Hires Four-time Olympian Bret Erickson as National Shotgun Coach

USA Shooting hired four-time Olympian Bret Erickson (Bennington, Neb.) as the new National Shotgun Coach in early January.

Erickson started shooting American Trap with his father at the age of 10 and shot International Trap and Double Trap competitively from 1984 to 2008. He graduated from Midland College in 1982 with a degree in Business Administration and joined the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit (USAMU) the following year. He retired from the USAMU in 2005 and most recently managed the Willawalla Creek Shooting Center in St. Jo, Texas, where he coached developing juniors and worked with the local 4-H.

During his competitive shooting career, Erickson was a member of four Olympic teams (1992, 1996, 2004, 2008), was on the USA Shooting National Team for 25 years and was a six-time USA Shooting National Champion. He was a 1990 World Champion in Double Trap, a four-time World Championship medalist and is a multiple World Cup and Pan American Games medalist.

“I am really excited about this new opportunity and I am really looking forward to continuing to work with the shotgun athletes as well as the USA Shooting staff,” said Erickson. “We have some of the most talented shooters in the world and I think the next several years are going to be a really fun time to be part of USA Shooting and we have the chance to bring home a lot of medals.”

Erickson hopes to build on the recent success of the U.S. Shotgun Team, whose members won four Olympic medals in 2008, nine World Cup medals in 2009, as well as several team medals at the 2009 Shotgun World Championships. “The Shotgun program has experienced some tremendous progress and improvements, and I look forward to keeping that momentum going,” he said.

Erickson and his wife Lisa have two teenage children, Mara, 19, who is a sophomore at the University of North Texas, and Cole, 16, is a junior at Muenster (Texas) High School.

As the National Coach, Erickson manages the shotgun Resident Athlete Program at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, he coaches the USAS National Team, National Development Team and National Junior Team athletes as they pursue their goal to win Olympic and international medals and he will also works with Regional Training Centers and other shotgun coaches around the country.

Benchmade Knife Company Partners With USA Shooting

Benchmade Knife Company has partnered with USA Shooting to offer the USA Shooting Team exclusive knives featuring Benchmade’s patented AXIS® locking mechanism, a 440C stainless steel blade with the USA Shooting Team logo and a blue glass reinforced nylon handle. The 527BK-USA and 527SBK-USA will be offered at $105. A portion of the proceeds from every unit sold will be donated to the USA Shooting Team. In addition to Benchmade’s national network of dealers, this knife is available through USA Shooting’s webstore at www.usashootingstore.com.
News & Events

GunBroker.com “Heritage Partnership” Auction Yields More Than $10,000 For USA Shooting

USA Shooting participated in GunBroker.com’s Heritage Partner Program in November 2009, generating over $10,000 for the USA Shooting Team. The month-long online auction on GunBroker.com, the world’s largest online auction of firearms and accessories, featured Olympic shooting memorabilia, commemorative edition firearms and several firearms donated by industry manufacturers. The auction was featured on the home page of GunBroker.com where it was exposed to their 2.5 million unique visitors per month. The special auction is an extension of the Hunting Heritage Trust’s “Treasures & Traditions” program.

Some of the unique items featured in the auction that generated the most interest and brought the highest bids were:
- Two Colt Single Action Army Revolvers - donated by Colt Manufacturing
- Ruger SR9 prototype - donated by Ruger, Baron Technology and TALO Distributors

“GunBroker.com has once again proven itself a great supporter of our U.S. Olympic shooters,” commented Buddy DuVall, Executive Director of the USA Shooting Team Foundation. “We appreciate the partnership GunBroker.com extends through the Heritage Partner Program. Not only did the auction generate funding for our Olympic shooting programs, but the exposure our organization received through GunBroker.com was tremendous.”

“Over the past several years, GunBroker.com has been proud to provide promotional online auction services to the Hunting Heritage Trust, NSSF, National Wild Turkey Federation, Youth Shooting Sports Alliance, IHEA, USA Shooting and others. We are very pleased to announce this expansion of our pro-bono efforts,” commented Steve Urvan, GunBroker.com, CEO and Founder. “GunBroker.com has enjoyed extraordinary growth and acceptance within the hunting and shooting sports community and we welcome this opportunity to give back to the non-profits that are so important to the future of our hunting and shooting sports heritage.”

USA Shooting would like to thank GunBroker.com, the Hunting Heritage Trust and the manufacturers that made donations to the auction and for their time and efforts toward this program.

About GunBroker.com:

GunBroker.com has established itself as an informative, detailed, secure and safe way to buy and sell firearms and hunting/shooting accessories. GunBroker.com promotes responsible gun ownership. As a company, GunBroker.com sells none of the merchandise listed on its Web site. Third-party sellers list items on the site, and every buyer or seller must be legally allowed to own firearms. Ownership policies and regulations are followed using licensed firearms dealers as transfer agents. For information on GunBroker.com advertising and partnership opportunities, contact Bob Delfay at rdelfay@earthlink.net.

Kimber Presents $75,000 Check to USA Shooting at Opening Day of 2010 SHOT Show

Members of the USA Shooting Team received a $75,000 check from Kimber Manufacturing President, Leslie Edelman, at the opening day of the 2010 SHOT Show in Las Vegas, Nev. on January 19, 2010. Since 2003, Kimber has supported the USA Shooting Team with contributions based on sales of the Kimber Team Match II 1911 pistol. This most recent check brings Kimber’s total contribution to $750,000, the largest amount contributed to USA Shooting by any firearm manufacturer in the shooting industry.

Edelman presented the check to team members pictured (left to right) Collin Wietfeldt, Corey Cogdell, Frank Thompson, Amber English, Keith Sanderson, Kim Rhode, Sean McLelland and Michael McPhail.

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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.

The Choice Of Champions.
Winchester® AA® Target Loads

- Hard shot for tight patterns
- Clean burning AA primer and powder
- Reloadable high-strength hull
- Loads for every shooter’s needs
The 2009 ISSF Rifle/Pistol Judges and Electronic Target courses were held at the U.S. Olympic Shooting Center in Colorado Springs, Colo. December 7-11. Course participants pictured include, front row (left to right): Toni Kulbacki, Lindsay Brooke, Ronald Morales, Maureen Trickett, Nicole Levine, Matthew Carroll, Katherine Harrington. Middle row: Wanda Jewell, Melissa Litherland, Gail Shetler, Randy Shikashio, Susan Abbott, Dmitriy Shteyman, Createstia Hall. Back row: Janet Raab, Earl Litherland, Zona Mowrer, Gary Trisdale, James Hall, Ganbayar Jantsankhorloo, Brad Donoho and Gary Anderson.