Left to Right: Kim Rhode, Vincent Hancock, Corey Cogdell & Glenn Eller

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JOHN MULLINS

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during my time at the World Shooting Championships, I had the pleasure of rooming with Cathy Arnot, one of the very talented physiotherapists for the USA Shooting Team and a Physical Therapy Professor at the University of South Carolina. Cathy and the Team’s other physio, Nick Potter, work around the clock to keep our team stretched, warm, and physically healthy. As a huge proponent of the benefits of physical fitness, I invited a professional to discuss how to stay healthy in preparation for, or during a major competition and throughout your shooting career.

Q: What is the most important component of exercise that a shooter should employ in his or her fitness regimen?
A: Core strength is essential for providing a stable base of support for the shooting athlete. Rifle shooters should also focus on flexibility, whereas shotgun and pistol athletes also need flexibility but should place an emphasis on strength—especially shoulders, arm, and core endurance. Their bodies have to be equipped to not only support their guns, but also endure and absorb the recoil of the guns. Also, whether beginning from scratch or changing your routine, please be sure to consult with a fitness professional or physical therapist prior to beginning a new exercise regimen.

Q: What particular flexibility exercises would benefit rifle shooters?
A: There was a study conducted on rifle and pistol shooters investigating the correlation between flexibility and lower back pain. Low back pain is common among rifle shooters and can become so severe that many either leave the sport or choose to shoot the prone position only. The research findings indicated that there is a positive correlation between back pain and IT band and hamstring tightness. Increased flexibility in both may help prevent low back pain. Thus, either a general flexibility program (with focus on the IT band and hamstrings) or most forms of yoga are acceptable, as long as the neck is in a safe position.

Q: Why are working out and stretching an important part of shooting?
A: Both are essential to injury prevention and the ability of assuming one’s shooting position that is necessary for better stability. The most common flexibility problems across all disciplines are tight upper trapezius, hamstrings, IT bands, hip flexors, and chest/pectoral muscles. On the contrary, the most common muscular weaknesses are the deep (transverse) abdominal muscles, external shoulder rotators, scapular stabilizers, and deep neck flexors.

Q: What should I do if I have an injury that only flares up when shooting?
A: First, discuss the injury with your coach and a health care professional to discover the underlying cause. It may be a biomechanical issue such as flat feet, a leg length discrepancy, or muscle imbalance—tightness or weakness. Another option is a repetitive training error or incorrect form.

Q: Why do I need to maintain overall fitness if I’m a shooter?
A: For all three disciplines, maintaining a high level of cardiovascular and overall fitness can help prevent injury, decrease the effects of jet lag, and increase your endurance. Not to mention, improve an athlete’s scores!

- Katie McGinty
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Gunnar Goodness
Cabela’s Pro Staff
The World Shooting Championships: A Prestigious History

The Superbowl. Wimbledon. The Kentucky Derby. The International Shooting Sports Federation (ISSF) World Shooting Championships (WSC). None of these sporting events are the Olympic Games. Shooting is one of few sports in the world that is practiced at competitive levels by men and women, as well as junior athletes, in all continents, with no exclusions. Many shooting athletes would argue that winning the World Championships is a much more demanding and satisfying accomplishment than even the Olympic Games. The WSC hosts more countries and competitors—the best of the best—whereas, in the Olympic Games, countries must earn a limited number of quota slots to compete.

Munich, Germany was the host city of the 2010 ISSF World Shooting Championships, accommodating a record-setting 2,500 athletes from 104 competing nations. The Munich shooting range is no stranger to large events—it was the site of the 1972 Olympic Games. In the 38 years since those Games were officially closed, the Munich range witnessed six Olympic records and thirty-four World records set on its grounds. In preparation for the largest shooting event hosted here since the ’72 Games, the Munich range underwent some cosmetic and structural upgradings. Fresh paint, new spectator seating, grass, and a monster green wall on the shotgun range were a few of the improvements designed to heighten the athlete and spectator experience.

For the first time in ISSF World Shooting Championship history, spectator tickets were sold for all competition days, to include common areas as well as VIP areas. Any spectator entering the Munich shooting grounds would have been treated to sights, sounds, and smells maybe more closely related to an amusement park: an explosion of color from the fluttering country flags at the entrance; vendors selling their merchandise from rows of tents; the reds, yellows, blues, greens, and oranges of athlete uniforms as they hustle to and from the ranges, the armories, and the bus stop; lines for the restrooms; lines for the beer tent; lines for the restaurant; smiles and laughter; tears and frowns; the low background hum of voices in the grandstand; the loud blasts of shotguns and the soft pops of air guns; cheers and clapping; the babble of foreign languages mingling into white noise; the smell of German beer foaming over two liter glass mugs; the tantalizing aroma of schnitzel, sausage, and pretzels. The World Shooting Championships has a colorful history. Although initially organized annually, the WSC is now held every four years to occur two years after the Olympic Games. The WSC every four years to occur two years after the Olympic Games. The WSC currently hosts fifty-five events in the four disciplines of shotgun, rifle, pistol, and running target. An additional forty-six events have been discontinued since the WSC began in 1897.

The first event conducted at the 1897 World Shooting Championships in Lyon, France, was 300m Free Rifle. This event is still considered the premier event of the competition. In a world where target changes are common—especially at the WSC—300m Free Rifle and 50m Free Pistol are the only two targets that have not been changed, except for the addition of an “X” ring. On the contrary, the 25m Rapid Fire Pistol event initially used a human-shaped target without scoring rings. In 1948, scoring rings were added, but it wasn’t until 1990 that the human silhouette became a circular shape. The 300m Army Rifle event was added in 1911 in Rome and required competitors to use the host nation’s “service rifle” as the competition firearm. In 1970, service rifle was removed as an event. Post-WWII restrictions against ownership of firearms prevented many shooting federations from re-establishing traditional shooting programs. The result was an emergence of air rifle and air pistols. Air gun development as high precision target arms is credited with having a significant role in the growth of the shooting sports in many countries. Since the first WSC in France in 1897, other host countries have included Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Argentina, Sweden, Poland, Norway, Russia, Venezuela, Korea, Canada, Australia, Croatia and the United States. Italy has the distinction of hosting the World Shooting Championships fifteen times since 1898, more than any other country. France comes in a distant second as hosting the WSC seven times. Russia can claim the most gold medals from the World Shooting Championships since 1897, but the United States has actu-
ally taken home the most overall total number of medals, regardless of color.

Many shooting events that are contested in the WSC are reflective of the chameleon nature of shooting sports. As technology develops and alters, shooting events are added and subtracted from a given competition’s roster. For example, pistol events made a debut in 1900 in at the WSC where the first pistol event was 50m Free Pistol. Shotgun, specifically, Men’s Trap, didn’t make an appearance until 1929. Men’s Skeet was added in 1958 in Moscow, the same venue that introduced Double Trap thirty-two years later in 1990. Women’s were first allowed to compete in the WSC in 1958 against male competitors in “open” events. After 1982, though, “open” events were renamed “men’s” events, effectively separating the genders within their respective disciplines. Separate junior (under age 21) events were not added until 1994, with the ISSF recognizing fifteen junior men and women categories. This is the highest world level that junior shooting athletes can currently aspire to reach because the Olympic Games do not have junior categories.

As an athlete competing in the 50th World Shooting Championships, the experience was both memorable and visceral. Aside from the pressure and extravaganza of the Olympic Games, no other world level competition comes close to eliciting the pride and team spirit of being a part of one of the largest teams the United States sent overseas. Congratulations to all of our World Champions and medalists and a special THANK YOU to all of the staff members who volunteered their time and expertise to make this year’s World Championship journey effortless (or at least appear so!).

Stay Army Strong! ■ SFC Theresa DeWitt
The previous three articles in this series have explored a number of interrelated topics culminating in a discussion of steadiness of the rifle or pistol at or near the moment of shot release. Shotgun shooters, archers, and others may be forgiven for skipping the articles though would be advised to go back and study all three since there are many insights that relate to all disciplines. In the end, acceptance of these or any other concepts depends upon open mindedness and faith.

Logic And Science

Too often, we use logic, science, and math to tell us what is or is not possible. We worship at the altar of science and math to the detriment of other valuable concepts. As a result, we often “lock in” our beliefs and limit our possibilities in scientific research, sport, and life. To be sure, science and math are valuable beyond measure; it is exclusive reliance on them regarding the exclusion of other factors and approaches that is the problem.

How often do we say “That isn’t true!” or make similar statements? Did that occur when reading the previous three articles or at a recent training session with a coach? The entire sporting world and scientific community believed that it was impossible for a human being to run a mile in four minutes or less. Scientific papers were published proving the fact. Roger Bannister and his “impossible” four minute mile disproved their theories (see previous series for further explanation). The ego dictates that what we believe is true because we believe it is true. Yes, that is circular and common logic. In turn, we use our beliefs to prove a point and ignore other relevant information. Yet, how often do you later discover that something else is correct?

Open Minds Open Doors

Years ago, while participating in a pistol masters camp at the Olympic Training Complex, there were a handful of incidents that occurred which adequately demonstrate the results of open mindedness or the lack thereof.

First, an intermediate level athlete was being closely watched by the head coach and they engaged in a short dialogue about a particular aspect of the athlete’s process. The athlete was having difficulty with a particular aspect of the shot process. The conversation ended when the athlete, in response to a suggestion, said “Oh, no, this is how I do it.” The athlete had no faith that he could learn something new to improve his shooting, instead believing that any change would “break” his game. Closed minds close doors.

Another athlete, struggling with keeping his eye on the front sight of the pistol instead of erroneously looking at the target, heard a suggestion to use a small white dot or other mark on the sight as an aid, and asked a coach about the technique. “No, that is a waste of time. Go ahead and try it for ten shots—it will get blurry and end up useless,” replied the coach. The coach was correct…right?

Let’s examine the dynamics of the situation. What is the issue? The athlete is looking at the target instead of the front sight. Can that habit, or any habit, be broken instantly? Generally not. What happens when one looks from the front sight to the target? The blurry target becomes clear while the sharply focused front sight becomes blurry. That means a white dot on the sight will, by definition, also become blurry.

The use of the dot is not a failure. Instead, it is a training aid to the athlete to show that he is now looking at the wrong place. With the dot aiding to increase awareness, the athlete was able to correct the issue and build a new habit. Eventually, the white dot stopped getting blurry… and the proper visual technique was now habit. Because the athlete had an open mind, and despite the “conventional wisdom” he was given, he was open to improvement.

Belief Without Proof

Because we are taught to rely so heavily on logic, science, and math, we have difficulty believing anything we cannot see or prove to ourselves. All three also deep affect how we approach everyday life in school, work, and in sport. How many times have we heard a parent, coach, co-worker, friend, or boss tell us something isn’t possible – when we believe otherwise? How many
things have we failed to accomplish because we did not make the attempt because the task was believed to be impossible?

For example, Eddie believes in the possibilities of the seemingly impossible. He also knows which of his employees have a similar mindset and openness to possibilities. He asked one of his employees what he knew about a difficult and tricky topic. “Nothing,” said the employee. Eddie continued: “Good! Would you explore the topic and let me know feasibility of creating a product?” In two weeks the employee had done his research and reported that he thought it might be possible. Six months later they had the software product in production. Both Eddie and the employee believed they could create the product, even though they had no proof that it could be done. And so it is in sport. Not one Olympic champion ever had proof in hand that they would eventually hold the gold. How many others, lacking proof or even belief in the possibilities, gave up the chase or never even started?

The First Step

The key to success is to take the first step. Not just once, but numerous times throughout your journey. Have the guts and faith to take steps in the direction you wish to travel. Are you assured of success? Of course not! Are you assured of an interesting and fulfilling journey? Most likely—after all, the journey is what you make of it. The journey will be difficult, yet the hardest part of the hard work is success. Shannon Miller enjoyed phenomenal success as a gymnast. Since most successful gymnasts are young, it is easy to assume that raw talent is an important ingredient in medals. Wrong—just as all other sports, the ultimate prize goes to the hardest worker. Shannon was not the most talented among her peers. Quite the contrary, she fell so much that her body was covered with bruises. She never quit. She always got up, continued training, and adding bruises. Eventually, she fell less and soared more. Her story and that of air rifle Olympic champion Nancy Johnson, are but two examples. Neither knew the end outcome — both athletes believed and were willing to take the first step.

In the summer of 2003, Jamie Beyerle and I held a six day “High Performance Shooters Camp” in Jacksonville, Florida. Twenty athletes were treated to intense drills, competitions, and discussions. Jamie had just won her first World Cup gold medal and imparted her fierce competitiveness to the athletes. They realized that there is more to shooting well than mere technique. It takes heart and guts, or “teeth” as one coach describes it. Like all good athletes, Jamie has faced adversity and times of great difficulty. Yet she has always “taken the first step” even when not assured of success — and “attempted” anyway.

The slogan at our camp was “What would you attempt to accomplish if you knew you could not fail?” What have you failed to attempt because you feared that you might fail? Take the first step!

• JP O’Connor

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.

“The key to success is to take the first step. Not just once, but numerous times throughout your journey. Have the guts and faith to take steps in the direction you wish to travel. Are you assured of success? Of course not!”
Where do World Champions come from?

Team USA did quite well at the World Championships in Munich Germany July 29-August 10. In Rifle, we saw our Junior and Open teams win World Championships and medals in Prone, 3P, and Air Rifle. Where did these results come from? Our sports system in the USA does not receive any Government support—most of our overseas competition does. Our teams are privately funded through our USAS donor programs, corporate fundraising, Foundation activities, USOC support, and an incredible amount of volunteer time that supports our athletes from their first day on the range on to an international podium.

Starting out...
All of our athletes have incredible family support. Many of our shooters start out like I did—my dad took me to the range at the local club to try shooting. Families are the initial and perhaps biggest athlete sponsor.

How about the clubs and teams out there? Most of our World Team were also part of junior teams, high school teams, and other youth programs. Clubs are precious—they are often the source of the best mentoring and coaching that a young person receives. Kudos and thanks to the countless volunteer coaches and mentors out there that enable our future champions to start in the sport and develop key skills and habits.

Camps and Coach Programs: All of our athletes have attended NRA, USA Shooting, and/or CMP affiliated camps and programs at the state and national level. Friends of NRA, State Associations, Clubs, High School JROTC teams, and other programs all provide key coaching and competition opportunities for our young athletes to develop in. Thanks to all the volunteer coaches and mentors out there that have a passion for this sport and developing the character of the young people in it.

Match Sponsors/Facilities: “We have hammers and nails...” (JR Coach Don Ridenour circa 1975, Langley Eagles Junior Rifle Club). If our athletes didn’t have a place to learn to shoot, we’d be unable to field competitive teams. Thanks to all those out there that maintain, develop, and often start programs and facilities—often against strong headwinds! And match sponsors—you are precious also. Our young athletes learn to compete, just like in all sports, during the critical teen years of development. Even a local club match requires a concerted effort of volunteers, parents, and mentors to host it properly. That sub-junior that you ran a match for might end up representing the USA some day in international competition!

NCAA and Club programs: Did you know that the NCAA is a major sponsor of Rifle opportunities and teams around the USA? The NCAA Rifle program provides key training and competitive experience for our athletes. We greatly appreciate the schools that sponsor Rifle as an NCAA or NRA Club sport. Few of the teams have fulltime, employee coaches. Many survive by the efforts of part time or volunteer coaches and boosters.

NCAA and NRA Club collegiate athletes were the backbone of the World Team medals in Munich.

So...whether you simply sent in a donation, or volunteer at a club, or coach and mentor our young athletes, you all had a part in creating a winning team of outstanding young Americans. Thank you and please keep doing what you do!

- National Rifle Coach, Major Dave Johnson

American medalists of the 2010 Fort Benning World Cup in Men’s 50m Rifle 3 Position with a USAS Official Sponsor—the Eley crew from London, England. (L to R): Dan Olley, Matt Emmons, Jason Parker, Martyn Buttery, and Andrew Lane

“Our teams are privately funded through our USAS donor programs, corporate fundraising, Foundation activities, USOC support, and an incredible amount of volunteer time that supports our athletes from their first day on the range on to an international podium.”
Confidence

Confidence—a ten-letter word suggesting a critical concept in shooting: Believe in yourself. An accomplished pistol shooter once told me that if I could patent a method to teach shooters confidence, I could quit my day job and live off the royalties. Despite that exaggeration, more often than not, shooters who have a high level of confidence are often the ones ascending the podium for the gold, silver, or bronze.

How can you develop that level of confidence? Unfortunately, there is no secret or trick to gaining confidence. Rather, it develops as a result of sound training methods, focused efforts to produce positive outcomes, and years of experience.Dynasties are not built overnight—they begin with careful planning, clearly established goals, strategies to accomplish those goals, and hard, hard work. When you first picked up a pistol, did you shoot straight 10s? No—like all other athletes, your skills will develop with time, experience, and hard work.

You may be confident, but do you really believe in yourself? Make your mental dialogue come alive by acknowledging your talents and accomplishments—likely achieved through hard work and goal setting—then repeat those motivational words to yourself incessantly. Baseball great Yogi Berra said, “Baseball is 90% mental and the other half is physical.” Though

“You may be confident, but do you really believe in yourself?”

Yogi needed a little work on his math, his suggestion that athletic pursuits involve mental control can easily be applied to shooting. Techniques such as visualization and positive self-reinforcement are helpful ways to gain confidence. For example, when practicing your lift and hold in front of the mirror, visualize the shot and the ten. Tell yourself that you can shoot tens—out loud.

First and foremost, believe in the power of your mind. Your mental strength and toughness—and not simply your age or experience—are the keys to accomplishing great feats. That mental ability, along with dedication and focus on your goals, will lead you to achieve amazing results. Believe that you are a great shooter, train to be a great shooter, and you will eventually become a great shooter. When you shoot a bad shot, move forward because you know that is not the norm for your abilities. Negative thoughts produce negative energies; if you entertain thoughts of “what if I lose,” or “I can’t shoot a 10,” then you are far less likely to succeed.

“Practice makes perfect” is the old adage, but a more appropriate saying is “Practice makes permanent.” Shooters and coaches should realize that we must train the fundamentals correctly to produce perfect shots consistently. Of course, the method that works for one shooter may not work for the next. Analysis of various methods is necessary to determine which methods work for particular shooters.

For example, I often think of a neighbor who farmed with his son for many years. He was injured while serving his country and always walked with a limp. His son was born long after he had sustained his injury. Interestingly enough, the son walked with the same gait as his father. As a young child, he looked up to his dad as a role model and followed his example. Watch other great shooters and imitate some of their techniques or methods. Some may work for you, increase your confidence, and improve your results. Of course, you should adopt and perfect the techniques that suit you best. You certainly don’t want to “limp” along in your shooting, but you can make great strides by adopting the sound fundamentals and techniques that build skill and confidence.

While proper training is a key element in a shooter’s confidence, experience is also a necessary element. Does this mean that our most seasoned pistol shooters feel no pressure in the final of a World Cup? Not at all. Their experience gave them opportunities to channel their emotions in a positive way. Though it may be typical to entertain negative thoughts in a stressful competitive environment, prepare yourself to foster a positive outlook with each match so that you become more and more comfortable and confident in those exciting situations. Whenever possible, participate in any and all the matches you can. Those experiences are opportunities to develop your mindset and confidence in match settings. You’ll gain insights and knowledge about the peculiarities of a match

— Eric Pueppke
Examining Success

The nine-hour flight home from Munich provided time for reflection after a very successful outing for the junior rifle team at the 50th World Shooting Championships. How did the group of eight young men and six young women earn three individual medals (one gold and two silvers) and two team medals (one gold with a world record and one bronze)? What did we do to make that success possible? What will it take in the future to repeat it? How do we improve in those events where we did not quite make the podium in either team or individual event?

Over the past half dozen years or so, the National Junior Team (former National Development Team), has benefitted greatly from the opportunity to attend some smaller international events like IWK (Munich Air Gun) and competitions in both Pilsen and the Czech Republic (Shooting Hopes). The experience garnered in these competitions and other large stages helps develop some of the skills that the juniors displayed in Munich. For example, athletes learn how to recognize their limits, deal with the unknown in the form of new ranges and procedures, interact with officials who do not speak English as a first language, and more. Without a doubt, my coaching skills improved whilst spending time with the junior team prior in various overseas matches and pre-competition camps. Yet, most of the juniors who shot in Munich were new faces—some had never even traveled out of the United States before. So, how was it possible that everyone defied the conventional wisdom that says in a shooter’s first international competition he or she will not do well because of the pressures of a new situation?

First, a thorough training plan for the entire competition year is also a critical factor to reach peak performance. This plan should also accommodate controlled and uncontrolled variables such as travel and team selection. Unfortunately, we did not know who would make the junior team until only one month before we left for the training camp. If an athlete was not prepared beforehand, it is extremely difficult to make any meaningful changes to a shooter’s training prior to a major championship. We must rely on the training and conditioning that they accomplish either on their own or with their local coach at their club or school.

The reality is we (as coaches) are not dealing with a machine that is programmed to consistently reproduce the perfect shot. Human performance involves errors and mistakes, both of which are part of that process regardless of the athlete’s abilities. The mistakes become fewer and the errors become smaller as the athlete develops skill, but those errors are still part of the process. Learning how to handle errors makes or breaks a competitive shooter. Does the error become a distraction, thus displacing mental energy to focus on the scores or worry about what the crowd might be thinking rather than focusing and firing the next shot correctly? While an athlete’s mind is a powerful tool, successful shooting is not a matter of being mentally tough enough to handle everything that could possibly happen in a match. There will come a day when a new mistake, error, or situation arises—then what?

Rifle shooting is a highly technical sport and involves hard work and a tremendous amount of preparation to succeed. All the equipment, adjustments, and positions require the diligence of a scientist making an experimental record to maintain consistency. Though the rifles themselves are highly accurate (especially air rifles), targets have evolved over the years to discern who is the better shooter through a progressive reduction in the size of the scoring areas, thus requiring even more attention to accuracy. So, did the talent junior rifle shooters have better rifles and more accurate ammunition than other teams in Munich? Perhaps, but most shooters in the world have access to the very same kinds of rifles and ammunition.

During the training camp organized in Pforzheim, Germany, the week before the World Championships, we made only a few position changes. Yet the one aspect of shooting that the coaches stressed to the junior team was fundamentals. For example, we did not work on how to aim, but more on how to do it efficiently and effectively while achieving correct, consistent head positioning. We worked to stop over-aiming or over-holding, pulling the trigger incorrectly or inconsistently, and poor follow-through habits. We also worked hard on achieving consistent natural point of aim. All of these things are basic skills in our discipline. Granted, we were making small, if not tiny, adjustments and improvements, but we were still working on the basics.
Many of the problems exhibited by our best junior shooters might lead an outsider to think that we are not training them correctly or efficiently. The reality is that our shooters come through a variety of shooting backgrounds. They begin shooting in a local club sponsored by a sportsman’s organization, JROTC, 4-H, or another youth organization. Regardless of the path, the most essential factor that determines their success beyond their personal motivation is the coaching they received and the fundamentals they honed during the first year or two of their career. In some cases, shooters only learn the most rudimentary skills and then he or she must figure out the rest. Some manage quite well, but there is always room for improvement. Moreover, what happens to those who do not solve the puzzle on their own? Most likely, they quit shooting to do something else. Who is at fault? Shooters often learn by trial and error without a coach who has a thorough knowledge of how to teach the fundamentals.

For example, in the beginning it is not necessary to delve into the nuances of trigger adjustment but rather how to pull the trigger smoothly without disturbing the aim. It is not necessary for the shooter to know about lock time to understand the need to follow through and develop the skill of calling the shot. It is not necessary to know about external ballistics to learn about aiming errors and their effect.

All those topics and more are certainly important for the athlete to develop into a complete shooter, but at the beginning, they only serve to muddy the waters. In addition, these articles will serve as a tool to help coaches understand how to cement the fundamentals in their athletes and why they are so important for beginning shooters. Over the next few issues of USA Shooting News, I plan to discuss the fundamental aspects of executing a shot, so coaches and self-taught shooters can validate what they already know and expand their thinking to include methods that they had not considered before. The intent is to help you solve the puzzle that is rifle shooting.

Marcus Raab
The Natural

You're a natural . . .” You've heard this phrase time and again by admiring peers, coaches, and onlookers. Dictionary.com defines a “natural” as “any person or thing that is or is likely or certain to be very suitable to and successful in an endeavor without much training or difficulty.” Yet, that definition is 33rd in a list of 38 options. So, am I naturally gifted? Do I have special abilities that have helped me succeed as a skeet shooter? Absolutely not—the first time I picked up a gun, I was not shooting straight rounds. Even today that is still a goal and notable feat when it occurs. My path to the elite level was and still is an unnatural process that includes hard work, determination, and discipline.

This widely debated topic of natural talent versus skills developed through old-fashioned hard work applies to all fields of endeavor, whether sport, business, or life. In fact, this debate has attracted the attention of scientists studying the question of natural abilities. In 2006, a team of British researchers concluded, “The evidence we have surveyed . . . does not support [that] excelling is a consequence of possessing innate gifts.” The team surmised that, traditionally, people learn quickly in the beginning but then reach a peak and eventually cease learning even though they still perform a given act. There are, however, very successful individuals who have attained that success by continuing to learn. Those people, the ones who progress beyond the early peak, will continue to grow and become the “greats” many admire. Yet, the question remains—how do these talented individuals continue to progress and succeed?

Avoid reaching your peak by becoming a student of your endeavor. Spend time discovering the intricacies of your shooting, your shotgun(s), chokes, gun fit, and more. Learn how the bunkers orthrowing machines work and the physics involved in target flight. And beside studying the game, spend considerable time learning about yourself. Do you know which supporting muscles are used to mount your gun? Also, I practice in extremes of weather and other conditions so I can improve my shooting by discovering how I react or need to adapt in a variety of situations. Rain, freezing sleet, wind, and certainly hundred-degree temperatures taught me valuable skills and developed the mental toughness that simply does not come “naturally.”

The bottom line is that there is no substitute for hard work, for the hours spent on the range, in the gym, with a mental coach, and following a nutritionist’s prescribed regimen. There is zero evidence of elite performance without the practice or experience to support such success. You will not step up to the line and break every target you shoot. You will, however, continue to succeed and improve your average with practice. Many of the top shooters in the field are some of the most diligent workers. Yet, more than just hard work that led them on their path to greatness. Deliberate practice is a concept that includes continually setting goals and observing and measuring the results—it is smarter practice. Sure, you could head out to the range today and shoot one hundred rounds, but you could also plan your training with purposeful drills and exercises that work toward an objective or focus on a specific element of your game. In all sports, quality training and focus on each repetition or skill provides the challenge and realizations that increase learning. Do you notice the difference? Rather than simply pulling the trigger, you have a specific goal for every single shot. Coupled with consistency in hours of practice, deliberate practice will help you achieve greater results.

Deliberate practice also includes mental focus and commitment to the task at hand. Elite shooters use practice to continually improve their game and optimum level of performance. Ferocity and intensity are two common characteristics I see in top-level athletes during their training. Always be conscious of your mindset throughout your entire practice. Get “in the zone” with each and every practice—the more you do, the easier it will be to find your rhythm in competition.

Another important aspect of deliberate practice is quality feedback. Many people dislike feedback for fear of negative criticism, yet without it they are often unable to improve. Take feedback willingly. For example, what should you do if your coach tells you that your feet are not properly aligned and suggests an alternative to balance your body weight? Continue your learning curve and discover why balanced body weight leads to better shots. Don’t shun the criticism; your coach wants you to improve.

“There is zero evidence of elite performance without the practice or experience to support such success.”

In addition, if you are not receiving feedback, then “carpe diem”—seize the day—and ask! The more you know, the more likely you are to improve. Hard work is just that—hard. The extra steps are necessary to distinguish the elite from the simply talented or “natural.” A desire to win requires the time and effort on the range in the form of deliberate practice, time in the gym to improve strength and conditioning, ongoing discussions with a sport psychologist (or coach or other credible shooters if a sport psychologist is not available), and most important, a will to win. The shooters on the line next to you are not naturally talented. Like you, they have shot hours on end to become the top finishers at a local match, the Nationals, or even the World Championships. But the good news is that greatness is available to everyone, if you are willing to work. If, at the end of your career, you are known for something, let it be your commitment to the sport and unprecedented work ethic, and not for being a “natural.” • Anonymous
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50th World Shooting Championships

Kim Rhode
Women's Skeet World Champion
Miranda Wilder zipped up her vest, poured a box of Winchester AA shells in her pocket, and began the long walk to Field C, where her World Championship destiny awaited. The young shooter watched as teammate Rachael Heiden beat China’s Zhu Jingyu in a sudden death shoot-off that lasted just one target, propelling Heiden to an individual bronze medal, as well as the Junior Women’s Trap team gold medal. “I was so nervous, I was shaking, but I knew I could do it. My main goal was to keep my head on the gun and see the targets,” said Wilder as her time had come. Stepping up to the line, she battled with Australia’s Catherine Skinner tied at 69 targets. Target after target, the two remained neck and neck. Wilder, undisturbed, nailed her tenth target in a row and again, waited for a door to open. A nasty climbing left target from post five sealed Skinner’s fate. There was no fist pump or whoop of joy from this 16-year-old; rather she calmly hugged National Coach Bret Erickson and graciously accepted congratulations from teammates and fans. “The main thing I remember was hearing the national anthem played while I was on the podium . . . it kind of blocks out everything else,” said Wilder. Her win marked the first medal—and gold medal—won by the United States at this year’s World Shooting Championships in Munich, Germany, and could not have been earned by a more deserving athlete.

The following day Wilder’s gold, the red, white, and blue found the podium again—in three’s—as Men’s 50m Prone Team and Junior Men’s 50m Prone Team shot for the gold and bronze respectively. The team of Matt Emmons, [rank] Michael McPhail, and [rank] Eric Uptagrafft proved why all three are consistently top-ranked shooters as they defended their World Championship title. Four years prior, the three sharp-shooting athletes won the same event in Zagreb, Croatia at the 49th World Shooting Championships. The junior shooters, Michael Seery, Jimmie Cooper, and Ryan Dunham-Bender, began their match in the hole. And just when a comeback seemed out of reach, these athletes managed the improbable by missing just one point in their last combined sixty shots. Another notable performance came from Meghan Morrill, who shocked the crowd with a 398 qualifying score in Women’s 10m Air Rifle. In her first International Shooting Sports Federation (ISSF) final ever, Morrill entered in a four-way tie for second place, yet fell to eighth place after a 100.1 point final. Despite her finish, Morrill gained invaluable experience for future successes. Her performance, coupled with that of Jamie Beyerle and Emily Caruso, marked the first Women’s 10m Air Rifle Team medal (bronze) for the USA in a few decades.

Matt Emmons was another American whose name circulated around the range as he encountered both triumph and tragedy in his third events. Emmons’ 597 in the qualification match and 101.5 in the final earned him seventh place in Men’s 10m Air Rifle, but he excelled in Men’s 50m Rifle Prone. Winning the first 2012 Olympic quota place for any American sport, Emmons brought home the bronze medal. “It’s great to be the one who grabbed the first Olympic Quota for America,” said Emmons, after the match. “Of course, I am not automatically qualified. The quota goes to the USA Shooting Team, and all the American shooters are passing through a qualification system in order to decide who will go to the next Games.” Entering in the bottom half of the final, Emmons shot a strong 104.2 points for 702.2 total points and a bronze medal. Sergeant First Class Eric Uptagrafft also shot in the final, yet finished seventh after two disappointing 9s.

Day four brought intense competition on the shotgun scene. The Americans had narrowly missed medal opportunities in Women’s Trap and were ready for heated contests. Jake Turner, also surprising the crowd with his impressive qualification performance, shot in his first-ever ISSF final for Men’s Trap. Turner was tied with six other shooters for only two spots in the final with 121/125 targets. As the first three athletes missed their shoot-off targets, Turner pulled the trigger and advanced to the second position with a clean break. In a shoot-out unlike the others witnessed at the World Shooting Championships, two targets put Turner and Spain’s Alberto Fernandez into the final. Ultimately finishing sixth, Turner said, “I was pleased with my performance and excited to make the final. Especially since I now have the opportunity to represent the USA and shoot with teammate John Mullins in the World Cup Final in Turkey.” Their younger teammates, the Junior Men’s Trap Team finished with a silver medal. The force of Matthew Gossett, Casey Wallace, and Morgan Harbison all performed exceptionally well. Gossett, in particular, edged out two other competitors in a sixteen target shoot-off for fourth place.

Ending another night on the podium after Junior Men’s Trap, the United States began the next day with high hopes for the Men’s Double Trap athletes. As the USA is home to the world’s top Double Trap shooters, medals were expected. Buttoning down against the cold, wind, and rain, the men were not deterred in their goal: gold. Staff Sergeant Josh Richmond was the Junior Men’s Double Trap Champion in 2005 and now holds the Men’s Double Trap title just five short years later. With an audience that included his parents, celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary their first trip overseas, Richmond was ready . . . for clean breaks, for a quota spot, for gold. Also shooting in the final was with their first trip overseas, Richmond was ready . . . for clean breaks, for a quota spot, for gold. Also shooting in the final was teammate Corporal Jeffery Holguin, who encountered a gun malfunction and was granted a five minute repair period. With a spare trigger in his gun case and a few minor adjustments, Holguin was back on the line. In a bizarre turn of
events, with only a handful of targets left, Holguin noticed that the angle of the targets had crept outside the proscribed limits. The ISSF referees hauled out target-setting hoops to discover that the right target was creeping towards the center.

As the delays grew longer, the weather continued to get colder as the sun dipped down, leaving the shooters chilled. Yet Richmond remained tough and shot straight for a perfect 50-target final, equal world record of 196/200 targets, and a gold medal. Despite the challenges of the mechanical failures, Holguin finished fourth. Their seventeen-year-old teammate, Billy Crawford, shot 50-targets in his third round for 143/150 total targets. With all three shooters in the top eleven spots, the Americans brought home a team gold medal and world record of 433 combined targets—three targets above the previous record. “I’m happy to have won the gold medal and brought a quota spot to the USA. We [the Double Trap Team] set the standard for the rest of the US Team. Now that we have a gold, I am confident that our team will continue on this pace,” said Richmond.

Though they may not have heard Richmond’s motivational words, the Junior Women’s 50m Rifle 3 Position Team put up a performance to write home about. The trio of Amanda Furrer, Sarah Beard, and Sarah Scherer demolished the former world junior record by a whopping eleven points. The domination doesn’t end there—the nearest competition was fourteen points behind the American team! More over, Scherer shot for 585 points and the individual silver medal. Their combined effort of 1747 points was the golden standard. Also competing in the USA junior scene was the Junior Men’s Double Trap team of Ian Rupert, Derek Haldeman, and Kelcey Depatis, who kept up the hardware parade with a team bronze medal.

Taking a cue from the junior women, the Women’s 50m Rifle 3 Position team was not going to let Germany take home gold. With a commanding lead and the favor of the fans, the German girls didn’t even register the American team as Sandy Fong entered the kneeling series with only thirty minutes left. Ten after ten after ten left Fong with an astounding 198 points and American team gold—beating the Germans by one point. Teammate and 2008 Olympian Jamie Beyerle set a new national record of 593 points in the elimination round. The final key to the win was Amy Sowash, who finished strong with 585 points. After her new national record, Beyerle maintained pace to secure fifth place and the third American quota. Beyerle was on top of her game as she nailed a 10.7 tenth shot in the final to move her up from eighth place.

Sergeant First Class Keith Sanderson of the Army’s World Class Athlete Program, another 2008 Olympian, battled a forearm injury throughout the 2010 season, yet pulled things together for the World Shooting Championships. Sanderson and his Men’s 25m Rapid Fire Pistol teammates, Specialist Brad Balsley and Emil Miley, grabbed an unexpected team bronze medal with a combined score of 1731 points. Another surprising success in the pistol discipline was Petty Officer First Class Sandra Uptagrafft who shot 384 points in Women’s 10m Air Pistol for an opportunity in the final. In her first ISSF final ever, Uptagrafft did her best to manage the pressure of the World Championships and shot for 93.3 points. Though her eighth place finish was out of quota contention, Uptagrafft faced some hefty competition and established a much-needed presence for the USA in Women’s Air Pistol.

With just a handful of days left in competition, the American team had a total of two individual medals and just three quota places. As both the time and number of quota slots dwindled, the pressure began to build. The United States looked to Kim Rhode, Haley Dunn, and Amber English for a Women’s Skeet quota. Rhode, after two World Cup gold medals this season, was the heavy favorite to win. With cold winds and rain throughout the day, the women turned to all means to stay warm—even using shower caps to keep their feet and hats dry. Rhode shot 72/75 targets in qualification and Dunn remained right alongside with 71 targets for a shot in the finals. Dunn had a little trouble as she dropped five targets for a combined total of 91 targets. Rhode remained consistent to her World Cup success, and shot a perfect 25 target final for the USA’s third individual medal and fourth quota. “It’s great to finally win a World Title in front of my parents,” said Rhode who credits much of...
her success to her parents’ support. Another noteworthy result of her winning is the additional USA Olympic Team selection points Rhode has accumulated—53 points with a 45 point threshold marker. Though it doesn’t mean she automatically qualifies, if another US shooter is unable to reach or exceed her points after 2011, then Rhode will embark on a historic journey towards her fifth consecutive (individual) Olympic medal—a feat for the record books. With talent like that in the American Women’s Skeet program, it should come as no surprise that the team (Rhode, Dunn, and English) brought home the gold medal.

Even though Women’s Skeet is in good hands, the juniors wanted to abolish any doubts with a team gold medal and an individual silver medal by Jaiden Grinnell. This feisty trio brought their American spirit—in the form of red, white, and blue cheerleading pom-poms—to the podium along with award-winning smiles and charm. Grinnell broke two targets to Yue Zhang’s (China) one target for the silver medal in a shoot-off. “We promised Bret [Erickson] a gold medal and we are happy to have followed through,” said Grinnell of the Junior Women’s Skeet Team’s performance. With the guts of Caitlin Connor, ferocity of Jaiden and tenacity of Brandy team shot for a total three higher than China.

The next championship came in the athletes: the Rifle Prone non-Olympic competition, red, white, and blue athletes watched two flags flying beyond the podium. Sharon Barazani and Sarah Beard have never competed in an international match, but inexperience didn’t stop them from dreams of gold and silver. Barazani fired sixty shots for 596 points and Beard was only one point behind at 595 points. In team competition, the team (with the addition of Amanda Furrer) technically broke the world record, but came in fourth. Yet the combined scores on the day of individual competition would have dismantled the world record set one day prior, but their individual scores do not count for team competition. Other women also achieving success in a non-Olympic way were the trio of Sandy Fong, Reya Kempley, and Rhonda Bright in Women’s 300m Rifle 3 Position. These talented markswomen finished with 1723 total points for the team silver medal in one of the world’s premier rifle events.

Finally, Sergeant Vincent Hancock, the 2008 Olympic gold medalist in Men’s Skeet, looked to defend his name and prove his talent. Hancock scored one medal on the World Cup circuit this year and was ready to face the best of the best. With a qualifying score of 123/125 targets, Hancock was tied with four other shooters in the final. In a field separated by only one target, the competition was fierce—missing a target would severely damage any hopes for a medal. Unfortunately, Hancock dropped a high house
target on the second pair on station four, leaving him to battle with Anders Golding of Denmark for fifth and sixth place in a sudden-death shoot-off. Even though medals were not on the line, the fifth place finished would bring home a quota slot to his federation. Hancock stayed straight for eight targets and breathed a sigh of relief as Golding missed a bird. “A medal would have been icing on the cake, but we really wanted the quota spot and Vincent stayed strong to accomplish that goal,” said National Coach Bret Erickson.

A solid gold performance came shortly before Hancock’s quota win by junior Jon Michael McGrath who stole the show in Men’s Junior Skeet. McGrath shot for 123/125 targets for an individual gold medal and dropped only one target in his second day of competition. His performance, along with that of BJ Blanchard and TJ Bayer, helped propel Junior Men’s Skeet to a team silver medal.

Beyond the stellar performances by several Open division shooters, the juniors stole the stage. With a haul of seven junior team medals and seven junior individual medals, it is safe to say that the future for shooting sports in the USA is in good hands . . . and trigger fingers. Though not often regarded as our front-line Olympic medal contenders, USA Shooting is proud of its talented young athletes. Facing the toughest competition in the world, our young men and women performed with dignity, calm, and accuracy. With more than 2,300 shooters competing, USA Shooting’s World Championship Team (not including juniors or non-Olympic events) managed a total of three individual medals, five Olympic quota places, six team medals, and 12 finals appearances. Far exceeding their performance at the 2006 World Shooting Championships, the US Shooting Team faced the best of the best and staked their claim to prominence on the world stage. • Katie McGinty
The USA Shooting (USAS) boasts more than just a successful Olympic shooting program—USAS is also home to a strong Paralympic contingent. Meet Danielle Fong, Sergeant First Class Josh Olson, Eric Hollen, and Mike Dickey: the four athletes representing the USA at this year’s International Paralympic Committee (IPC) World Shooting Championships in Zagreb, Croatia. Though the USA didn’t bring home any medals this year, the event served as a tremendous learning experience for these 2012 hopefuls.

A surprising twist occurred during the closing ceremonies, when the USA’s Hollen was presented the Fair Play Award for the exceptional sportsmanship he demonstrated during his Free Pistol Match (P4). Hollen accidentally fired a shot just above his target while working on early trigger pressure during the approach. He immediately notified the Range Officer to report the miss since no one else saw it. This occurred twice as he struggled with his trigger throughout the match. While the misses cost him a twenty point deduction, Hollen said, “I knew it was the right thing to do.” His sportsmanship and integrity impressed the match staff. Bob Foth, National Paralympic Coach, said, “Eric was able to garner tremendous respect that spills over and reflects well on all of us—our country, team, and organization.” In Women’s Air Rifle Standing (R2), Danielle Fong, sister of standouts Sandy and Abby Fong, fired 384/400, one point below her personal record to finish 13th. However, her best performance occurred in the 50m Rifle Prone Mixed (R6) event. Both Fong and Olson (also competing), earned the opportunity to shoot in the final. Olson’s performance was particularly noteworthy as he was situated on a windy end of the range. No other competitor within ten firing points of Olson qualified for the final, including the Air Rifle Prone SH1 gold medalist shooting right beside him. Seeded third (Fong) and sixth (Olson), the American paralympians both shot very disciplined and smart matches. Fong finished in fifth place with 688 total points for a new personal record, and Olson was just behind her in sixth with 687.9 points.

Finally, Mike Dickey finished 54th in the Air Rifle Prone SH1 Mixed event (R3) with a score of 591 points. Prior to the IPC World Shooting Championships, Mike was experimenting with a new shooting table for his wheelchair. Unfortunately, the table he used in Zagreb wasn’t as sturdy as he had hoped. He has since met with Larry Miller at Vertec Precision Machining to construct the perfect table.

The IPC World Shooting Championships was a terrific opportunity for our American Paralympians to gain invaluable experience and affirm their commitment to shooting in 2012. The match provided Hollen, Dickey, Fong, and Olson the knowledge necessary to successfully move forward with their training, competition, and shooting careers. With the exception of the Paralympic Games, the IPC World Shooting Championships was the biggest match of the quadrennial, and certainly one of the biggest competitions for the majority of the USA’s paralympians. Watch for more news as your American athletes continue on the path to Paralympic success.

• Bob Foth, National Paralympic Coach; Photos Courtesy of Yuman Fong
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he weather in Colorado Springs, Colorado, was typically hot and variable for the 2010 USA Shooting National Championships for Shotgun. Thunderstorms moved in almost every afternoon, threatening competitors, audience, and staff with heavy rain and lightning. Despite the soaring temperatures and rain, spirits and scores alike were high. Close to 300 athletes scattered across the shotgun range throughout the 12 days of Nationals; 156 for Trap, 90 for Skeet and 33 for Double Trap. Olympic Training Complex (OTC) Resident Athletes medaled in almost every event, a stellar showing for the 2012 Olympic hopefuls, while the juniors lived up to expectations by posting some excellent scores. The overall performance by all athletes showed the skill and potential of a majority of the competitors, making for some challenging finals and exciting wins.

Sergeant Vincent Hancock of the United States Army Marksmanship Unit (USAMU), dominated Men’s Skeet emerging with a 274/275. His near perfect score was one of the highlights of Shotgun Nationals, yet not a surprise performance from the 2008 Olympian. He was followed closely by Jon Michael McGrath, an up and coming junior shooter and recent addition to the roster of OTC Resident Athletes. McGrath edged out TJ Bayer by one target for a total score of 269 targets. BJ Blanchard, also from the OTC, joined McGrath and Bayer in the lineup of medalists for Junior Men’s Skeet. Blanchard shot a 266 for second place with McGrath taking first and TJ Bayer coming in at third.

The USAMU brought successful shooters to the scene in double trap as Sergeant Glenn Eller took home the gold with a total of 336 targets and teammate Staff Sergeant Josh Richmond came in second after shooting a total score of 333 targets. SSG Richmond recently claimed an individual and team gold in Men’s Double Trap at the Acapulco World Cup this year and is on his way to following in the footsteps of SGT Eller, 2008 Olympic gold medalist. Joining the USAMU men on the podium, Derek Halde-man shot for a total of 328 targets, distinguishing himself even further as the Junior Men’s Double Trap Champion with a score of 327 targets. Ian Rupert and Billy Crawford, both members of a successful World Championship Team, also medaled in Men’s Double Trap shooting 319 and 317 targets.

2010 National Championships

Your new Women’s Trap national champion, Rachael Heiden. One short week later, Heiden also claimed the title of National Junior Olympic Shooting Champion in Junior Women’s Trap.

Sergeant Glenn Eller of the US Army Marksmanship Unit, shoots his way to the Men’s Double Trap national championship title.
Men's Trap and Junior Men's Trap were dominated by OTC Resident Athletes. John Mullins took a six target lead, ending with a total of 266 targets and gaining the title of Men's Trap Champion. His teammates, Jacob Turner and Colin Wietfeldt, were a close second and third place, shooting 260 and 259 targets. Wietfeldt also medaled in Junior Men's Trap, taking home the gold medal with a score of 260 targets against Garrett Walters and TJ Bayer's respective 256 and 254 targets to fill out the podium.

The OTC women were not far behind their male counterparts. Rachel Heiden came up with a total score of 253 targets to become the 2010 Women's Trap Champion. Teammate and 2008 Olympian, Corey Cogdell, continued the OTC trend with a score of 249 for third, while second place was captured by Kelsey Zauhar who won the spot just ahead of Cogdell with a score of 250. The focus of this particular match was definitely on Heiden, given her particularly impressive accomplishment of winning an Open event while still a junior. However, this success is not unexpected coming from the young woman who was also the 2010 Junior Olympic Women's Trap gold medalist.

The title of Women's Skeet Champion went to Kim Rhode, who continues to surpass all expectations and deliver impressive scores. Already a four-time Olympic medalist, Rhode shot for a score of 267 targets at the 2010 Nationals. She came out ahead of Caitlin Connor (OTC), who also gave an impressive showing by medaling in both Women's Skeet and Junior Women's Skeet. Connor placed second in the Open division with a total score of 262 targets and came in first place as Junior with a similar score of 261 targets. Teammate, Jaiden Grinnell (OTC) closely followed Connor in both divisions, claiming third in Women's Skeet and second in Junior Women's Skeet. Her score of 259 targets in Junior Women's Skeet was 16 ahead of bronze medalist, Morgan Craft (Hughesville, Pennsylvania), a J2 competitor. USA Shooting's 2010 National Championships for Shotgun was a successful event that crowned several new National Champions and tallied impressive scores.

- Calah Duryea
Sergeant Joshua Richmond, a double trap shooter, and Sergeant First Class Terri DeWitt, a woman’s trap shooter, will serve as the Shotgun Primary Athlete Representative and Alternate Athlete Representative, respectively. Sgt. Richmond and Sgt. 1st Class Dewitt, both from the US Army Marksmanship Unit (USAMU), were elected by competitors in the 2010 USA Shooting National Championships. Their term of service is four years, beginning with the USA Shooting Board of Directors meeting in October. Those athletes, along with the Athlete Advisory Committee Representative, Connie Smoteck, provide a voice for the athletes and play an active role in USAS Board functions, subcommittees, and actions. --USA Shooting members who wish to contact Sgt. Richmond may call him at 706-745-5707, or email him at jrrchmnd@yahoo.com or Sgt. 1st Class DeWitt by calling 706-545-1152 or emailing theresa.dewitt@usaac.army.mil. (July 15, 2010)

At the National Junior Olympic Championships (NJOSC) Ian Rupert smoked the competition in the Men’s Double Trap final. Rupert finished with 175 targets—exactly four targets above silver medalist Garrett Walters. Walters finished at 171 targets. The bronze medalist, David Radulovich, shot a strong 44 target final to finish at 170 targets. In the Women’s event, Rachael Heiden (pictured above, center), who just won the National Championships title for Women’s Open Trap, conquered the NJOSC event as well. Heiden walked into the final with a four target lead (113 birds) and shot a solid 23-target final. The silver medalist was Kayle Browning at 131 total targets. Browning and bronze medalist Stephanie Martinago both entered the final with 109 targets, but Browning broke ahead as Martinago shot a 19 target final. The Men’s NJOSC Trap Champion was Garrett Walters, who shot for 142 targets. Silver medalist Jacob Gogno shot a 20-target final. The bronze medalist was Jake Wallace with 137 total targets. In Men’s Skeet the gold medalist was Jon Michael McGrath, who shot up from fourth place with a perfect 25 X 25 in the final round. Phillip Jungman took second and William Brazell became the bronze medalist. In Women’s Skeet, Caitlin Connor, the gold medalist, finished at 144 targets and Jaiden Grinnell, the silver medalist, scored 139 targets. The bronze medalist was Morgan Craft at 136 targets. For all categories, visit the press releases. (July 10, 2010/July 21, 2010/July 23, 2010)

At the ISSF World Cup in Belgrade, Serbia, Matt Emmons knocked out an outstanding 1278.4 total points for a gold medal in Men’s 50m Rifle 3 Position. SFC Daryl Szarenski finished fourth in Men’s 10m Air Pistol, just 1.3 points shy of the bronze medalist. Szarenski, finished with 683.5 total points and then took 10th in Men’s 50m Pistol. His teammate, Brian Beaman also qualified for the finals with 583 match points and shot a strong 99.8 point final. Also competing in a final was USA’s Jamie Beyeler, who finished fifth in Women’s 10m Air Rifle. Beyeler stayed in the top ten finishing 7th in Women’s Three Position with a score of 677.9. (Rank) Michael McPhail took home the gold in Men’s 50m Prone with a score of 702.8 and teammate, Matt Emmons, came in 4th shooting 701.4. (June 30, 2010/July 2, 2010)

For full press releases on all USAS Bulletin and Performance Reports, please visit www.usashooting.org.
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.
ATHLETE OF THE MONTH

August: Rachael Heiden

Rachael Heiden may not be able to rent a car without hefty fees, yet she is one of the most talented female trap athletes in the USA. National Coach Bret Erickson was singing her praises as he said, "I'm proud of the hard work she puts in her training, it is reflective of her success on the line. She has vaulted herself into a position to be a top contender for the 2012 games [for Women’s Trap]." In July, Heiden (Clinton, Mich.) not only won the title of National Champion in Women’s Trap, but one week later also asserted her dominance on the Junior field as well. Heiden nailed 253 targets in USA Shooting’s National Championships, leading the competition by three targets. In the National Junior Olympic Shooting Championships, Heiden’s steady aim created a five target gap; she finished with 136 total targets. Moreover, a few days ago, Heiden’s strong shooting helped the Junior Women’s Trap team to a team gold medal. In individual competition, Heiden crushed China’s Zhu Jingyu with just one target in a shoot-off for the bronze medal.

Not only is this talented athlete an outstanding shooter, but Heiden is also involved in the shooting community. At this year’s NRA Show, she served as an "NRA Ambassador," helping to promote shooting sports to youth across America. For a shooter that moved from Michigan to Texas to take advantage of daily training, Heiden certainly has the hardware to show for the sacrifices she has made on her path to success. Her commitment to furthering the sport of shooting via youth education and outstanding performance on the field make Rachael Heiden the clear choice for USA Shooting's August Athlete of the Month. Congratulations Rachael!
1. Though there are many differences between American and International Trap, what is the difference in the angle of the targets each side of center?
   a. American-20 degrees; International-30 degrees
   b. American-17.5 degrees; International-45 degrees
   c. American-19 degrees; International-45 degrees
   d. American-20 degrees; International-30 degrees

2. Which shooting Paralympian also has an Olympian sister?
   a. Mike Dickey  b. Danielle Fong
   c. Eric Hollen  d. Josh Olson

3. Which non-Olympic events were contested at the World Shooting Championships?
   a. Men's 300m Standard Rifle
   b. Junior Women's 50m Rifle Prone
   c. Men's 50m Running Target
   d. All of the Above

4. During which years was shooting omitted from the Olympic Games?  Hint: Pick two!
   a. 1904  b. 1908
   c. 1932  d. 1928

5. The USA Shooting Team women are very successful across the disciplines, yet in which discipline and event have they yet to win an Olympic medal?
   a. Women's 25m Sport Pistol
   b. Women's Trap
   c. Women's 50m 3 Position Rifle
   d. Women's 10m Air Pistol

6. What is the time limit for the prone series during Men's 50m Rifle 3 Position?
   a. 45 minutes  b. 60 minutes
   c. 30 minutes  d. 75 minutes

7. Who was the last woman to win an Olympic medal in Women's 25m (Sport) Pistol?
   a. Ruby Fox  b. Gail Liberty
   c. Kim Dyer  d. Sandra Uptagrafft

8. What were the only two Olympic shooting events held in the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, Calif.?
   a. Men's 50m Rifle Prone
   b. Men's 50m Free Pistol
   c. Men's 25m Rapid Fire Pistol
   d. Men's 50m Rifle 3 Position

9. When was the US Army Marksmanship Unit established?
   a. 1950  b. 1944
   c. 1956  d. 1968

10. How many open individual gold medals did the USA Shooting Team win at this year’s World Shooting Championships?
    a. Four  b. Three
    c. Six  d. Two

Answers are on page 33
World Championship Assessment

The 50th World Shooting Championships were, with no dissenting opinions, the best ever! The Deutscher Schützenbund (German Sport Shooting Federation) did an outstanding job in planning, organizing and executing the largest Olympic-style shooting competition to date. Over 2,300 athletes competed in 4,000 event entries representing 103 countries. It was an enormous undertaking to coordinate hotels, volunteer support, transportation, training, and competition.

The Hochbrück Olympic Shooting Range served an ideal site with all ranges within a short walk of one another. Although the site of the 1972 Olympic Games, the continual modernization of the range complex provided an excellent environment with electronic targets, five new shotgun fields, a finals hall, and an award ceremony pavilion.

The U.S. Team was the largest ever to attend an ISSF competition with over 100 athletes, coaches, and staff. Bob Aylward, Executive Officer for the US Army Marksmanship Unit, did an excellent job coordinating all travel, entries, housing, and pre-championship training. As a testament to our strong teamwork, every Team member reported to the appropriate place on time in the proscribed dress with no errors or omissions—quite a feat with the large number of athletes who had not previously attended such an event. I am proud to report that our Team—your Team—looked great in their new uniforms, represented the United States honorably and performed well on the ranges.

Much World Shooting Championship information is reported in this edition of USA Shooting News detailing athletes, events, and results, but I would like to provide additional insight. We had very high outcome expectations going into this World Championship with the goal to win seven individual medals in Olympic events. While somewhat of a stretch considering we won only one medal at the 2006 World Shooting Championships in Zagreb in 2006, the objectives were realistic considering our strong World Cup results in both 2009 and 2010. However, there were disappointments and, as was the case in Munich, there were pleasant surprises as well. We did start slower than expected missing the finals in Women's Trap, and then making finals but not medaling in Men's Air Rifle, Men's 50m Free Pistol, and Women's 10m Air Rifle. Outcomes became more positive with Matt Emmons winning the bronze medal and an Olympic quota place in Men's 50m Rifle Prone, and Jamie Beyerle, in spite of a back strain, qualified for the final in Women's 50m Rifle 3 Position and won a quota place.

Josh Richmond then took command in Men's Double Trap winning the gold medal and quota place while equaling the world record, with teammate Jeff Holguin finishing fourth. Those performances were followed by Kim Rhode earning her first World Shooting Championship title in Women's Skeet, and concluding with Vinny Hancock's fifth place finish and quota place in Men's Skeet. When the shooting concluded the U.S. Team won three individual medals in Olympic events, secured five Olympic quota places, and placed 12 shooters in finals competitions.

Our Team members also made names for themselves in event team competition—which is conducted only at the World Championships—by winning championship titles in Women's 50m Rifle 3 Position, Men's Double Trap, Women's Skeet, and repeating for the second consecutive World Shooting Championship in Men's 50m Rifle Prone. Equally impressive was the performance of our junior shooters with Jon Michael McGrath, Miranda Wilder, and Sharon Barazani winning Junior World Championships in Skeet, Trap, and 50m Rifle Prone respectively. There were many more excellent performances in both the Open and Junior individual and team events that demonstrate our Team's ability and confirm our future potential, which is most exciting.

Although our National Coaches are recognized for an excellent job in preparing our athletes for competition, much credit for the success of our shooters is due to the coaches and clubs where these athletes learn the skills of competitive shooting and train on a regular basis.

All of the USA Shooting family can take immense pride in the results of our USA Shooting Team at the 50th World Shooting Championships, and we sincerely thank you for your involvement and support! • Bob Mitchell
Snapshots from a Fist Pumper

The camera never lies—or so the saying goes. Yet my digital camera only captured part of the truth—or truths—evident at the 50th World Shooting Championship, where your US Team members poured their souls into every shot. The camera couldn't capture Miranda Wilder's elation as she claimed her World Championship title in Junior Women's Trap. Nor could it grasp the mix of emotions in Jake Turner as he charged into the final in Men's Trap—his first in a major competition. But the camera did one thing unerringly: it focused.

So in the spirit of the snapshot—with as much focus as I can provide in a few words—I'll share with you some of the indelible images and corresponding lessons from the grandest match in the history of International shooting.

First image: Matt Emmons. He is a clear threat to win a medal in three events every time he checks into a match. He'll compete in his third Olympic Games in 2012, no doubt, and he'll be the man to beat. In Men's 3-Position Rifle, the camera caught the surprise in his face as he inadvertently triggered an errant shot at the start of his kneeling series. Ten points lost, potential medal lost, Olympic quota place lost, and clearly, an opportunity lost. But we can all gain a sense of something that Matt has in abundance: Persistence. Shot after shot, match after match, Matt continues to plug away, taking the bad with the good, and it’s mostly good. Before he cases his rifle for the last time, I predict he'll double or triple the two Olympic medals he already owns. Persistence.

Jamie Beyerle is persistent, we know, but also determined. She was determined to grab that Olympic quota place in Women's 3-Position Rifle, and although she was sitting in eighth place with one shot remaining in the final, she did what any determined athlete would do: Shoot a 10.7 on that tenth shot to jump up to fifth place and grab that quota place. What image did the camera grab? Nothing! I was so busy jumping and yelling and fist-pumping that I forgot to snap the moment. For me, not so much, but for Jamie, plenty: Determination.

I was determined to get a good pic in the Double Trap final, where Josh Richmond absolutely would NOT let his golden moment slip away. He led the match from start to finish, and he finished in spectacular fashion, smashing all 50 targets to equal a world record in the finals and win the medal and the quota going away. The picture? Not so great. A driving rain fogged the lens but only intensified Josh's best quality: Desire. No one in the world wanted that victory more than he. Desire.

How badly did Vincent Hancock, 2008 Olympic Gold Medalist in Men's Skeet, want to win a medal and a quota? Well, he always wants to win, comes ready to shoot every time, and never tolerates missing a target. And yet miss he did—three times in one day—and found himself tangled in a shoot-off with Anders Golding from Denmark for fifth place and that cherished quota slot. No one in the world is tougher in a shoot-off than Vincent, and he just rolled those targets... I have the pink puffs of smoke in the picture to prove it. But what did the camera miss? Vincent's real strength is his high standard of excellence every time he steps on the field—practice or World Championships. Vincent's secret is this: He not only impresses us with his high scores (and he has plenty), but he also impresses us with a "low" score, which in this case, was a mere 147 X 150. Excellence.

For Kim Rhode, the camera couldn't catch one of her best qualities: Her willingness to work. She is, by far, the hardest worker on the Team (see “W.O.R.K." in the Mar/Apr 2010 issue). Five or six days a week she marches out to one of three ranges near her home and then pounds out 400 – 1000 rounds a day. Eight in the morning to 2:00 PM, Kim Rhode will be knocking out targets like an eager beginner. It's what she does, it's who she is, and it's why she's great. Both a noun and a verb, "work" for Kim is her life in training so that in the biggest match in history she can do what she expects of herself: Perform and win. The camera did catch one sparkling image: Kim on the victory stand with both hands raised in an exalted posture of elation. She deserved it. She worked.

My favorite image? It's the one you see on the cover of this issue—Brandy Drodz, Caitlin Connor, and Jaiden Grinnell claiming their gold medal for the Junior Women's Skeet event. Embodied in that picture are lots of crystalline concepts, including the pride of shooting for the USA, bonding with supportive teammates, celebrating a hard-fought victory, and reveling in an unforgettable moment in an unfathomable event. And the camera caught the best feature of all, the one we all shared as our athletes did us proud: Joy.

- Bill Roy
On the Complex / Director Operations Marketing Competitions

Shooting Industry Masters

Members of the USA Shooting Team recently traveled to Grand Island, Neb., to participate in the 8th Annual Shooting Industry Masters and 19th Annual Shooting Industry Academy of Excellence Awards hosted by FMG Publications. This year's Shooting Industry Masters event, conducted at Grand Island's Heartland Public Shooting Park, 23 – 24 July, featured a record number of industry teams with 270 shooters competing for individual and team bragging rights in professional and industry classes.

In conjunction with the Masters event, the Shooting Industry Academy of Excellence held its annual banquet to recognize the shooting industry’s best by awarding the 2010 Academy of Excellence Awards to 14 winners that emerged from a class of 114 product entries and 41 service award nominees. FMG Publications, an Official Sponsor of USA Shooting, held a fundraiser during the event that raised a record $32,000 to benefit the NSSF’s First Shots Program in addition to $7,000 raised to support the USA Shooting Team. Congratulations to all of the Masters and Academy of Excellence winners and “Thank You” to FMG Publications for your support of the USA Shooting Team! For more information on the Shooting Industry Masters and Shooting Industry Academy of Excellence please visit www.shootingindustry.com.

* Corrie West

Meet Calah Duryea, the New Coaches’ Administrative Assistant/Team Manager

Calah Duryea comes to USA Shooting as a recent Colorado resident. Moving from Florida in the late fall of 2009, Calah works as an administrative assistant to both the coaches and USAS staff. Her primary responsibilities include booking flights for athletes and coaches, assisting with paperwork for entries in various competitions, and general office projects. Despite the short time she has been here, Calah has already had the opportunity to assist with some of the recent competitions in Belgrade and Munich, as well as issuing team uniforms to the over 90 competitors and staff that went to the World Championship. In early June, she traveled to Fort Benning, Georgia to observe and assist with Rifle/Pistol Nationals. Regarding this trip Calah said, “I felt that I learned so much simply observing the different competitors and matches. The experience was invaluable and I’m very grateful that I was given the opportunity to gain some hands on experience with USAS at a competition. I have learned a great deal both about USAS and the sport of shooting.”

A 2008 graduate of Hillsdale College in Michigan, Calah is looking forward to utilizing her talents gleaned as an English major. She believes that the ability to communicate effectively both orally and through writing is an important asset in any field but particularly in her role as administrative and coaches’ assistant. Calah believes that her new position with USAS suits her skills admirably as she really enjoys working and interacting with the coaches, staff and members.

When she isn’t booking plane tickets, Calah enjoys long walks, a good book, a love of baking that she inherited from her Mother, and watching baseball games, particularly the Tampa Bay Rays. Calah also likes visiting her family in Florida and spending time with her four younger siblings. She is excited to continue learning about the sport of shooting and happy to assist anyone who has questions about USAS. Calah can be reached at 719-866-4883 and calah.duryea@usashooting.org

2008 Olympic Men’s Double Trap gold medalist Glenn Eller shooting with Team Timney Triggers at the Shooting Industry Masters.

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Rapid Changes

The competition season has come and gone here at USA Shooting. There are just a few matches remaining on the calendar and the Competitions office is finally getting a chance to wrap up loose ends from an intense 2010 season. It is also the time when we are able to reflect on the excellent accomplishments of our athletes, the laughter and fun we had with our fantastic group of volunteers, and recount all of our memories from the last six months of events.

A group of young skeet shooters really touched my heart this year when I heard about their adventures in Colorado. Brothers, Joe and Roy Chavelitlekha, Trey Buretz, TJ Bayer and and Coulter and Granger DeWitt (also brothers) decided to take a break from training between the USA Shooting National Championships and the Junior Olympics (both held in Colorado Springs) to raft down the Arkansas River near Cañon City, Colorado. For some of the boys it was their first white water rafting trip, and like all teenage boys who enjoy the outdoors, they were pumped for a cool new adventure. The raft guide tested the boys through the first few miles of the river海aling into the rapids to assess their abilities. With six fit, confident teenage guys, the guide was excited this run would be fun and the boys would be able to engage in more challenging sections of the river.

White water rafting is full-on adrenaline rush from start to finish and a must-do for any thrill-seeker who visits Colorado. The guides are well-trained and very familiar with the stretch of river they raft daily. Safety is first priority and rafters are briefed on the rules of the rapids during the 20 minute bus ride up to the drop off point and patrons are tested on their abilities as soon as the raft enters the water. Emphasis is always placed on working as a team while on the river.

The boys enjoyed a great day on the rapids, and nearing the end the boat approached a section of the river called “sledgehammer” and because the boys displayed great teamwork and skill, the guide led them down the more challenging portion of the rapids. The boys were laughing and excited by the thrill of the journey down the river. As the nose of the boat ripped into the rapid, the impact was too strong, throwing three of the boys overboard. TJ Bayer was the first to recover, hitting a rock, but able to grab a hold of the boat and climb back in.

Later, but Joe struggled to break the surface. “I felt the pop in my leg sometime soon after falling overboard, but the adrenaline worked well as a painkiller. Every time I swam to the surface the raft was above me. I’m not sure how long I had been under water exactly. After a while I was on the edge of blacking out,” Joe recalls. Above the water, the boys were panicked by Joe’s disappearance; TJ contemplated jumping back in to save a good friend. The seconds passed like hours as the time keeps ticking and Joe has yet to surface. The guide suggests jumping on the raft in an effort to pop Joe from the spot where he remained trapped under the raft. Moments later Joe surfaces and is tugged onto the boat. The boat and the boys float to safety where Joe is rushed off to the hospital.

Just a few days later, Joe is out at the shotgun range with cast and crutches after suffering a spiral fracture in his leg that required surgery. He is there to cheer on his brother Roy and friends TJ, Coulter, Granger and Trey, excited to see them complete in the National Junior Olympics. His spirit is most inspiring and uplifting as he recounts the events of the adventure down the Arkansas River. It was a trip they will never forget and share for a lifetime. Joe even thinks they might even have a rematch with “sledgehammer” sometime down the road. But for right now they are all just happy to be able to share the memories, friendships and the sport of skeet. Undoubtedly, 2011 will bring more adventures and “rapid” change for competitors and the Competitions department alike!

Lindsay Brooke
Test Your USAS Knowledge: ANSWERS

*Retractions: In the previous issue, question seven asked “Who was the last American to win a medal in Men’s Trap.” While the answer was listed as Glenn Eller, gold in the 2008 games in Men’s Double Trap, the correct answer was Josh Lakatos (silver) and Lance Bade (bronze) in the 1996 Olympic Games. In addition, question nine asked “Who was the first US Paralympian to win a Paralympic Shooting Medal.” Though Dan Jordan (2004 silver Men’s 3 Position Rifle) is a correct answer, clarification is necessary. Roger Withrow won a gold medal in the 1984 New York/Stoke Mandeville Paralympic Games in Men’s 10m Air Rifle, which were formerly a separate entity called the Wheelchair Games.

1. (b) **American trap** - 17.5 degrees and International trap- 45 degrees; the two events vary greatly in the angles at which targets are thrown.
2. (b) **Danielle Fong shares an Olympic sibling**—Sandy Fong, a member of the 2008 Olympic team for Women’s 50m Rifle 3 Position.
3. (d) **All of the above**. In addition to the 15 Olympic events contested, the ISSF also hosted junior events and several 300m, running target, and non-Olympic pistol events.
4. (a) and (d), In 1904 and 1928 shooting events were removed from the Olympic Games due to controversies and amateur rules.
5. (d) Americans have yet to win an Olympic medal in Women’s 10m Air Pistol.
6. (a) **Men’s 50m 3 Position rifle consists of 120 shots** - 40 each in prone, kneeling, and standing. In prone, athletes have 45 minutes to fire all shots, 60 minutes for the standing series, and 75 minutes for kneeling.
7. (a) - Ruby Fox won the silver medal in Women’s 25m Sport Pistol at the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, Calif.
8. (a) and (c) - After a hiatus from shooting sports in the 1928 Olympics, the 1932 Games resulted in amateur rules that were strictly interpreted, thus resulting in the prevention of many top shooters from competing.
9. (c) - The USAMU was established in 1956 under the direction of President Dwight D. Eisenhower.
10. (d) - The USA won two individual gold medals in the Open category at the World Shooting Championships. The third medal was won by Matt Emmons—a bronze medal in Men’s 50m Rifle Prone.

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Volunteer Program Redux

For volunteer driven organizations, it is essential to have a volunteer program that is not only inviting, but also provides adequate and up-to-date information. USA Shooting is in the process of updating its volunteer program to better serve the needs of its volunteers in regard to information and education. Such areas of renovation include: instructional manuals for range officers, rule clarifications to ensure consistency, and a regional mentor training program to assist in the familiarization and education of rookie volunteers at both the club and national levels. Wanda Jewell, longtime USAS volunteer, will coordinate this effort by contacting experienced range personnel and judges for information and input in the redesign. Any assistance and input will be greatly appreciated. Please contact Wanda at wrjbronze@comcast.net.

Director Election

The Nominating Committee is seeking qualified candidates to serve on the USA Shooting Board of Directors for three seats that are up for election this fall. Two At-Large positions as well as the fundraising seat will be elected by the Board at the October 23rd meeting with the new directors seated at the spring meeting and serving a four-year term. The Nominating Committee is seeking candidates who will measurably add to the breadth and scope of the Board and whose skills, abilities and potential value are not already adequately represented. Candidates for the fundraising position should have a proven track record of fund raising experience, with emphasis on non-profit organizations.

Nominations should include a personal statement and biography outlining qualifications. Nominations can be sent to Dr. James Lally, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, via postal service to; Chino Valley Medical Center, 5451 Walnut Avenue, Chino, CA 91710-2609; via e-mail to drlally@primehealthcare.com and by fax at 909-464-8882.
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