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Calling All USA Shooting Team Members

By Robert Mitchell

Olympic shooting has a long and rich history. If you have been fortunate enough to be a member of a U.S. Shooting Team representing the United States in world competition, you are part of that history. Olympic-style shooting events and rules have changed over the years but the memories remain. To date, 500 International Distinguished Shooter Badges have been awarded, several thousand shooting athletes have participated in UIT/ISSF championship competition and many more thousands have participated in international Olympic-style shooting competitions.

We have a large number of shooters that have not only many great experiences but also have a strong affinity for the Olympic-shooting sports. The military has been a significant participant in our heritage with the U.S. Army, Marines and Air Force making up more than 80% of our Teams up through the 1970s. The civilian composition has since increased with funding from USA Shooting and decreasing government emphasis on military marksmanship.

The United States Army Marksmanship Unit hosts a popular bi-annual reunion for their current and former members but there has never been such a gathering for former USA Shooting Team members. In a recent discussion the proposal was made to have such an event at Colorado Springs hosted by USA Shooting. This would be a great opportunity to renew friendships and meet our staff and resident athletes. Moreover, we hope many former Team members would become reengaged with the sport by volunteering at national championships and selection matches. And we would also welcome some of your great experiences on paper that could be published in USA Shooting News. Our staff will do the editing, so do not be bashful.

Our Alumni Association is up to 163 members. We ask you to pass the word and encourage others to join. It would not be requirement to be an Alumni member to attend the reunion but we encourage everyone eligible to do so.

We would be pleased to host a USA Shooting Team reunion next summer. With reasonable interest we will gladly organize a program during our shotgun national championships June 29 or July 7 and arrange a group hotel rate. Please let Alumni Association President Lones Wigger (lones.wigger@usashooting.org or at 719-866-4886) know your interest in participating. I am confident such an event will be enjoyed by all!
The best of the best took aim at the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup Final for Rifle and Pistol in Wroclaw, Poland and the ISSF World Cup Final for Shotgun in Al Ain, United Arab Emirates (Oct. 1 to 6). These prestigious, invite-only events feature competition from the top international style shooting athletes in the world to include this year’s World Cup Final champions, top World Cup performers of 2011 and the reigning World Champions. Many of these shooters will also be competing in the 2012 Olympic Games in London. This event is not only the culmination of a successful ISSF World Cup season, but provides an opportunity to shoot against many athletes that will also appear in London.

In Wroclaw, the USA Shooting Team sent eight talented athletes—a very large number for such an elite event. Sergeant First Class Eric Uptagrafft (Phenix City, Ala.) set the standard for the American team as he broke onto the podium with a silver medal. Uptagrafft shot 599 out of 600 match points in Men’s 50m Rifle Prone. He stayed strong throughout the final to shoot 102.8 points for a total of 701.8 points. This win marked Uptagrafft’s third silver medal on the international scene in 2011—his earlier two came at the ISSF World Cups in Sydney and Changwon. He is among the competition that will be at London as he has already qualified for a nomination to the 2012 U.S. Olympic Team (pending approval by the U.S. Olympic Committee). His performance at the ISSF World Cup Final has certainly solidified him as a front-runner for the Olympic podium. National Rifle Coach Major Dave Johnson commented, “Eric stepped back on to the podium in style; his 599 in the qualification was very solid and a good performance. He’s in great shape as he approaches the London Olympic Games.”

Teammate Sergeant First Class Keith Sanderson (Colorado Springs, Colo.) of the U.S. Army’s World Class Athlete Program (WCAP) claimed a spot on the podium in Men’s 25m Rapid Fire Pistol. Sanderson, who won the first Men’s Rapid Fire quota this year, shot 581 match points. He nailed 17 hits after just four rounds and then 26 hits after seven rounds to win the bronze medal.

In Al Ain, Kim Rhode (El Monte, Calif.) did it again—won, of course. Rhode added another Women’s Skeet gold medal to her collection. The shooters began the day in scorching conditions of 105 degrees, but California native Rhode didn’t bat an eyelash at the oppressive heat. “I am used to shooting in these conditions,” said Rhode in an interview with the ISSF’s Marco Dalla Dea. Rhode shot 69 targets in the match and had her work cut out for her in the final as two other shooters were ahead of her. Known for her fierce finals presence, Rhode delivered with 24 out of 25 targets—the highest final—for a one target win.
Planning for Your Match

By National Pistol Coach Sergey Luzov

In my previous article in the March/April 2011 edition, we discussed preparation for the match. Now, what about planning for the match itself?

Planning for a match should include all aspects of your individual needs. Also, it must include all training and competition priorities.

First, you need to examine the competition schedule and know all the training and competition start times. Having a print out with you at all times would be a good idea. Now you can plan your days accordingly. For example, if the match start time is in the afternoon, you will have to adjust your normal schedule for sleep, food and exercise to accommodate the demand for your body’s best function in the afternoon.

Start time is not necessarily convenient for normal breakfast or lunch and can be right on top of your normal lunch time. In this case you’ll have to decide on your food plan change—when and how much to eat before the competition, what is the plan for snack(s) between the course of fire (and final) and the hydration plan. It is possible that your match finishes late and you miss dinner or it is too late to go out to eat. Consider ordering food to the room or having groceries prepared in advance—but make sure that room service is an option at your hotel.

Also, remember that having enough rest is very important for your body to recover and perform. This is especially important for athletes who have a multiday match, which is almost always the case. Make sure to get plenty of sleep. It would be wise to discuss your sleep schedule and create a lights-out agreement with your roommate.

How about fitness? Well, light PT to maintain your body’s physical function would be my recommendation. You do not want to spend all your energy to run a marathon a day before the match. Some light cardio or walking will help keep your body alert and ready for the match.

A pre-match training strategy is one of the most important parts of your plan. Normally, you have one or two training sessions before the match. They are not very long, so it would be a bad idea to try and catch up with all the training you missed for the past month. Shooting as many shots as you possibly can is also not good. Instead, you need to determine tasks to accomplish for those short trainings and stay on course. Sometimes, more dry-firing on those days can be better solution.

It is also important for you to review the USAS/ISSF Rule Book and make sure you know the rules for your event, so you would be confident in taking action should the situation arise. Also remember to check your equipment before you go and make sure it meets the Rules requirements. It will give you peace of mind and save a lot of stress.

Now the match plan itself. The warm-up plan should include a timeline and list of tasks to accomplish: point setup; equipment necessary for the match (yes, timer too!), sighting timeline and focus task as well as match task goal, breaks plan, and finally, keys for the gun case. Consider giving your coach an extra set just in case.

Keep your start number and gun control form in the gun case. Make sure you have everything you need in one place in order to focus on executing your match plan. It would be wise to start training on a new schedule for several days prior the match, just like you planned for it. And one more thing: please check the weather for the place you go to. We’ve seen athletes showing up in flippers and shorts in the middle of winter in Colorado. And, it does not matter if you are from Hawaii or Florida. Take better care of your match plan and it will help you succeed.

“It is also important for you to review the USAS/ISSF Rule Book and make sure you know the rules for your event, so you would be confident in taking action should the situation arise.”
We now come to the moment of truth; pulling the trigger. It is the culmination of all aspects of the shot. If everything is right, the shot is on its way to the center of the target. Done in the wrong manner, no matter how good everything else was up to that point, the shot will land away from the center.

Proper trigger control is accomplished when the shooter applies increasing pressure to the trigger, without disturbing the sight picture, while the hold is acceptable until the shot is fired. This is another fundamental that is simple to describe in theory but very challenging to perfect and maintain.

The actual physical act of pulling the trigger is no more than a small muscle contraction of the index finger. Yet, sometimes the finger just won’t bend or pulls at the wrong time! In the first part we will look at trigger release from two of four different angles:

- **Mechanical**—the types of triggers, adjustment and weight and how they influence technique.

- **Technique**—position, contact between the hand and the pistol grip and trigger, trigger pull variations and recommendations.

In Part 2 we will look at:

- **Mental Tasks**—what processes does the brain perform to make the best possible decision about when to pull the trigger?

- **Psychology**—what effects do excitement or caution play in triggering during competition?

**THE TRIGGER MECHANISM**

The link between the finger and the firing of the shot is the trigger mechanism itself. Most target rifles have various adjustments for the trigger. But first we need to understand some basics about triggers in general.

**THE TRIGGER**

Using a series of internal mechanical levers and springs, the trigger of a competition gun is a complex device that holds the firing pin in the cocked position until the shooter is ready to fire the shot. The trigger can normally be adjusted within design limits for weight of pull as well as other variables to adapt to the desired feeling for a shooter. The actual interface between the shooter’s finger and the firing mechanism is the trigger lever or “shoe,” which projects below the rifle action into the trigger guard. This part is itself often adjustable either forward, backward or laterally depending on the size of the hand and how the shooter grips the rifle.

If you think of the trigger as a simple mechanical lever, the resistance that must be overcome to fire the shot depends where the finger is placed on the trigger. Placing the finger high increases the pressure needed to fire the shot while placing the finger low on the trigger will increase the mechanical advantage of that lever and reduce the force needed, thus making the trigger feel lighter. It is important to always place the finger in exactly the same spot to get a consistent feeling.

The trigger width can also change the way one trigger feels over another. A wide trigger shoe spreads out the pressure over a larger area making it feel like it takes less pressure to fire the shot. One of the risks with wide trigger shoes is that more pressure may be applied to one side or the other resulting in lateral displacement of the gun.

Another factor is the curvature of the trigger. Curved triggers can help the shooter consistently place the finger in the middle of the trigger. But the risk is that the pressure may be exerted upward or downward, potentially disturbing the aim. Straight triggers often have a small clip or marking point that can help the shooter place the finger on the same spot for each shot. Since trigger shoes are often interchangeable, one can choose a trigger shoe that suits the shooter. Trying out a teammate’s trigger to see how it feels is a good exercise. Remember to ask permission first!

In general, the trigger pull weight should be in the range of 80 to 120 grams for smallbore and precision air rifles. There are no rules based requirements on triggers for these rifles other than being safe, with the only exception being that set triggers are not allowed on air rifles. Sporter air rifles, being low cost introductory rifles, do not have high quality, finely adjustable triggers found on precision air rifles. They typically come from the factory with trigger weights in the range of three to five pounds. There are ways to make them feel better and reduce the pull weight, but the minimum trigger weight is still 1.5 pounds. Older smallbore rifles found in many clubs may still have three pound triggers.

**TRIGGER TYPES**

Regardless of the weight, there are several different types of triggers. Most factory produced target rifles arrive equipped with a two-stage trigger. It is
characterized by an initial, free movement or take-up in the trigger until a point of resistance is felt. This is the first stage. The rifle is fired after the application of additional pressure on the second stage. There are some characteristics of this kind of trigger that you need to know about to make it fit the particular shooting style.

The first stage should not be very long. It shouldn’t take much time or allow the finger position to change much during movement. It should have the same resistance throughout its travel and never stick or catch before the second stage is reached. If it does not feel right, look for help from a gunsmith or coach.

The weight of the first stage is important to the overall feeling of the trigger. For example if the total trigger weight is 100 grams and the first stage is 50 grams once the second stage is reached only 50 grams more pressure is needed to fire the shot. Pulling the first stage has already taken up half of the total pressure and only the remainder needs to be applied. What you feel as the pressure to fire the shot is really the differential resistance or extra pressure needed after the first stage in order to overcome the second. In general, the resistance of the first stage should not be less than half and may approach two-thirds of the total.

Once the second stage is reached, correctly adjusted triggers will exhibit absolutely no movement until the shot fires. Shooters call this a clean break or crisp release of the trigger. If the trigger still moves slightly without releasing the shot you have trigger “creep.” This condition can irritate and distract the shooter, and is usually caused by incorrect adjustment or mechanical wear. Regardless, the trigger needs to be adjusted or repaired before the shooter begins to doubt their shooting abilities. Any creep should be adjusted out of the trigger by adjusting the engagement of the sear following the manufacturer’s directions. Adjusting the engagement too finely can cause premature wear of the sear surfaces, and ultimately requiring replacement of parts or the entire trigger itself.

Another type of trigger is the single-stage which has no perceptible movement during the application of pressure until the pull weight is overcome. Sometimes referred to as a “direct” trigger, when finger contact is made with the trigger, the next movement will release the shot. Creep in this kind of trigger is also frustrating to good shooting and should be adjusted.

An advantage of the single-stage trigger is that it can save time and energy since there is no first stage to take-up or rush through in a high stress moment; you are ready to go right away. Some shooters may have problems initially with the light single-stage trigger because they are afraid of touching the trigger before they are ready. But with a little practice they soon get used to touching the trigger a little more carefully.

To emulate a single-stage trigger, the first stage of a two-stage trigger may be set to a very small movement; try it out to see if you like it. But this is not the ideal way to use a two-stage trigger. The best solution is to replace the trigger with a single-stage design. If you like the feeling and want to convert your gun to a single-stage trigger, always seek out a gunsmith. Some rifles cannot be safely converted to single-stage triggers. Air rifles in particular may accidentally discharge during loading if the trigger is not adjusted properly.

An older trigger type that has been used in the past but has lost favor with shooters is the set trigger. A set trigger functions normally as a two-stage trigger but when a secondary lever is pressed or engaged to “set” the trigger it functions like a single-stage trigger with a release weight as low as 30 to 50 grams.

### SETTING THE TRIGGER PRESSURE

So how light or heavy should the trigger be set? As always, this depends on personal considerations, so everyone has to find the ideal solution for him or herself. But there are some hard learned lessons that you may find helpful.

Know your trigger. Become familiar with all the possible adjustments by reading and learning the manual that comes with the gun. Try out different settings in practice and develop a feel for the trigger.

Test your trigger in a match. Lighter is not always better! What works in a low-pressure practice situation may not be right in the high excitement of a major competition. If you have ever pulled through both stages of a two-stage trigger in a match, you might consider a heavier trigger.

Trigger pressure and grip pressure are related. If you hold too tight with the grip hand the trigger finger won’t be as sensitive to pressure. Make certain that you can accurately feel the trigger pressure with your normal grip.

If you shoot in cold weather, you might consider raising the total trigger pressure since you lose sensitivity in your finger as the temperature goes down.

If you are a three-position shooter, adjust the trigger so that it suits your most unstable position (usually standing).

Over-travel is the movement of the trigger after the shot has fired. Very often the trigger is set so that the pressure drops off significantly. Depending on the shooter, this may cause the rifle to move during the shot. If shots are going off-call and everything else looks correct, experiment with adjusting the over-travel so that it is relatively short and near the overall trigger weight.

### TRIGGER MAINTENANCE

Just like any other moving part, the trigger can suffer from wear. In such a precise mechanism, tiny amounts of wear can cause major problems. So you should check frequently that the trigger is functioning the way you want it to.

A way to do this is to cock the unloaded gun and rest it on a solid surface
and watch the trigger movement as you pull it. Another way is to hold the gun in a stable position and, with your eyes shut, test the feel of the trigger. You should be able to quickly check that the trigger is indeed OK or determine if it needs adjustment.

**TRIGGERING TECHNIQUE**

How the trigger is released is decisive in producing an accurate shot. A proper release requires a few things; it does not disturb the aim of the rifle on the target. Regardless of the type, or weight of pull, the shooter must pull the trigger smoothly, applying pressure directly in line with the barrel. Trigger release also must be coordinated with the visual perception of the sight picture so that it happens at the exact time that the sights are properly aligned on the center of the target. Coordinating this action while the gun is constantly moving is challenging to say the least.

The trigger hand has several functions. It is a very important contact point between the shooter’s body and the stock of the gun. It helps hold and support the gun; that makes it important for the steadiness and balance of a position, but its main function is to place the trigger finger in the ideal position. The grip of the hand must be the same for each and every shot; the same placement, with the same firmness without excessive muscular effort. There must also be a space between the trigger finger and the stock as well as the trigger guard so no movement of the gun is induced while pulling the trigger. The trigger finger must be consistently placed on the trigger in the correct location and its movement must be directly in line with the barrel and the line of fire.

Where the finger is placed on the trigger shoe itself is also an important consideration. For heavy triggers, like those on 300 meter Standard Rifles (1.5 kilograms) or sporter air rifles, placing the trigger in or next to the first joint of the index finger usually provides better control. For smallbore and air rifles with light triggers, the better place is not the tip of the finger, but rather just behind the pad but before the first joint. The potential problem with using the tip of the finger is that pressure will be applied at an angle to the side and not directly in line with the barrel or the designed functioning of the trigger mechanism itself. Placing the first pad on the trigger is also potentially problematic since the fleshy part of the pad can act like a shock absorber, cushioning and slowing the application of the decisive pressure when applied. The point just behind the pad and before the joint is closer to the bone.

As a test, when the shooter pulls the trigger several times in quick succession, the gun should not move. Adjust the trigger, your position or the grip until you are satisfied.

The shooter must begin the process of releasing of the trigger during the approach to the target. As the aim is refined the pressure is smoothly increased as the oscillations of the rifle become smaller and under control in an attempt to fire the shot at the moment when the rifle is moving minimally or appears to stop. Beyond this point the movement tends to increase and further attempts to release the shot increase the risk of a poor result. The best course of action is to abort the shot and make another attempt.

There are generally two distinct methods for applying pressure to the trigger. In the first method the pressure is smoothly applied to the trigger in a continuously increasing manner until the shot fires. The rate of increase may change, but during the process it is always increasing. This method has the most utility in stable positions where the movements are consistently centered and small as in prone or kneeling.

The second method is a graduated release technique where the pressure is increased while the aim is acceptable. When the aim becomes unacceptable the pressure is held on the trigger until the aim becomes acceptable again, with pressure increasing in steps until the shot is fired. This method is especially useful in positions that are less stable or with heavy triggers.

With a two-stage trigger, the technique is modified slightly but only in the application of the initial pressure, as it is taken up immediately as the sights approach the target. After this point the shooter uses either the smooth continuous smooth release or the graduated release method.

There are of course many possible variations of the two methods. One of these is a pulsating pressure where the shooter adds and reduces pressure to the trigger during the preparation for the shot but as the aim becomes refined, the pressure is quickly applied using a smooth, continuous method. This variation was often used with set triggers.

The successful shooter must learn the correct method of applying pressure to the trigger, gradually and evenly. This does not imply slowly, but rather smoothly without jerking. The time to complete the trigger pull can be very short (<1 second) but not so long as to miss the best opportunity. The ability to pull the trigger smoothly is not enough on its own to produce an accurate shot; it must be coordinated in time with proper aiming.
The USA Shooting Team gave its all at the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Clay Target Championships in Belgrade, Serbia. In addition to the talented men and women of the USA Shooting Team, a full junior team competed as well. Members of both teams qualified at the National Championships and Fall Selection matches of 2010. With over 600 competitors (both junior and open shooters) from 76 federations, the competition is decidedly fierce.

Of the Americans competing, four (two open and two junior) shooters were defending World Champions. This bi-annual competition is unique in that it offers junior shooters the opportunity to bring home a World Championship gold medal in both team and individual matches. The championship began on Sept. 3 and concluded Sept. 13, in Men’s Skeet.

The Team returns home with a total of two individual open medals, three individual junior medals and three junior team medals. Two of those medals included new world records as the Junior Men’s Double Trap trio of Billy Crawford (Johnstown, Ohio), Private First Class Derek Haldeman (Sunbury, Ohio) and Ian Rupert (Muncy, Pa.) smashed the team world record by 13 targets. The American’s total of 428 targets broke a record that had held since 1998. Crawford also raised the standard by setting a new junior world record of 147 out of 150 targets in Junior Men’s Double Trap.

Another notable performance came from Sergeant Glenn Eller (Katy, Texas) in Men’s Double Trap. Eller, the 2008 Olympic gold medalist, reminded the crowd of the definition of tenacity as he charged through...
36 shoot-off targets to advance to the final. After nearly shooting an entire round, Eller attacked the final to the tune of 45 out of 50 targets to find himself in a shoot-off yet again, but this time the prize up for grabs was the bronze medal. Eller silenced Vitaly Forkeev of Russia after only four targets to bring home the bronze.

Four-time Olympic medalist Kim Rhode (El Monte, Calif.) asserted herself as a serious medal contender for 2012 as she won the bronze in Women's Skeet. Rhode shot 72 match targets to tie four other shooters for three spots in the final. After four shoot-off targets her fate—and place—in the finals was sealed.

Known for her consistency in the final round, Rhode fired a perfect 25 targets to place herself in line for a spot on the podium. Tied with China’s Wei Ning at 97 out of 100 targets, Rhode hit seven targets to Ning’s eight targets in the shoot-off. Rhode said, “It is an honor to represent the USA and bring home a medal. This was a great test of my skills against the competition that I will face in London and my goal of five medals in five Olympic Games.” As last year’s world champion, and again finding the podium in 2011, shooting fans are expecting great things from Rhode in 2012.

In Junior Women’s Skeet, Morgan Craft (Hughesville, Pa.) fired 68 out of 75 match targets to tie with Lucie Anastassiou of France for the silver and bronze medals. Craft shot one target to Anastassiou’s two targets in the shoot-off to claim the bronze medal for the red, white and blue. Not only did this add to the USA’s medal count, but this was Craft’s first overseas trip and first international medal. She commented, said, “All the time, sweat and dedication put into my training this summer more...."
than paid off when the bronze medal was placed around my neck on the podium while representing the USA.” Teammates Brandy Drozd (Bryan, Texas) finished in fourth place with 67 targets and Riley Moody (Collinsville, Okla.) shot 58 targets for eighteenth place. The Women’s Junior Team scored the team bronze medal.

Delivering the performance of her career was Janessa Beaman (Elbert, Colo.) as she earned the title of Junior Women's Trap Champion. Beaman finished with 70 out 75 targets for the uncontested gold medal and a new personal best. Teammate Miranda Wilder (Diana, Texas) performed to the tune of 67 targets to tie with Lucie Rylichova of the Czech Republic.

Making short work of her competition, she claimed the fifth place spot in a one target shoot-off. “Janessa equaled her personal best and separated herself from the rest of the field,” said National Shotgun Coach Bret Erickson. Rounding out the trio was Ashley Carroll (Solvang, Calif.) with 64 targets for tenth place. With all three juniors in the top ten, the junior women secured the team gold medal.

In Women’s Trap, Corey Cogdell (Eagle River, Alaska) was one of the five shooters who made their way into the final via a shoot-off. Cogdell shot 72 match targets and 16 targets in the final to finish with 88 total targets and sixth place. The USA Shooting Team’s junior presence would not be possible without funding from the Dallas Safari Club. National Shotgun Coach Bret Erickson said, “We are grateful for the support of the Dallas Safari Club of the Junior World Clay Target Championship Team. Without their assistance, many of these juniors would not be able to attend and represent the United States. With a total of six junior medals, it’s safe to say that the future of shooting is in good hands—and trigger fingers.”

Overall, the United States finished third in the medal standings behind Russia and China with eight total medals. Russia scored 12 and China had six medals (more silver than the U.S.).
On July 22, the USA Shooting International Shooting Park at Fort Carson was host to 21 attendees of the Executive Sports Leadership Conference in Colorado Springs, Colo., hosted by General Sports and Entertainment. The conference included general managers, team owners, executives and former athletes in many professional sport disciplines including football, basketball, baseball, hockey and motorsports. This was everyone's first attempt at international style trap and skeet and for some, their very first time shooting a gun. Members of the USA Shooting Team and Resident Athletes were on hand to assist, coach and offer shooting tips. One of the guests was John Molloy, co-owner of Pike's Peak International Raceway (PPIR). The famed motorsports venue is just south of the shotgun range in Fountain, Colo. It had been many years since John had shot a round of skeet. However, under the careful tutelage of Rachael Heiden, Caitlin Connor and Jaiden Grinnell, he was soon breaking birds regularly. John and his wife, Jeanne, thoroughly enjoyed themselves and came away with an appreciation of the skill level needed to consistently break these challenging targets.

John pointed out that auto racing and international trap and skeet may have more in common than meets the eye. Both require an extremely competitive mindset, excellent hand/eye coordination, stamina, years of practice, great coaches and an unrelenting desire to be the best. John was so impressed with our shotgun athletes that he asked Bret Erickson, the National Shotgun Coach, if they would like to try their hand at driving Legend race cars at PPIR! Bret agreed and on August 25, athletes and coaches met John at the racetrack and got their first taste of driving a race car. After instructions and safety rules (these Legend cars can reach speeds of 130 mph!) the driving and the trash talk began. It was great to see USAS athletes “blow-off some steam” and have fun.

USAS would like to thank John Molloy and Pikes Peak International Raceway (www.ppir.com) for providing this opportunity to our athletes.

BUNKER CLUB VISITS OLYMPIC TRAINING CENTER

By Robert Mitchell, Chief Executive Officer

Twenty-four members of the Bunker Club spent a weekend in Colorado Springs visiting the United States Air Force Academy and the Olympic Training Center, observing demonstrations and shooting on our ranges. It was a time enjoyed by all including the athletes and staff that provided familiarization with USAS programs and offered coaching on the ranges. The visit also offered the opportunity to socialize at the Club’s annual get-together weekend. The Bunker Club was formed by Colonel Dennis Behrens over 15 years ago with the objective of raising funds to replace the aging trap machines at the International Shooting Park. After accomplishing that objective, the group has continued their support to USAS by funding the financial foundation for the Athlete’s Endowment.
2012 U.S. Olympic Trials for Shotgun

Part I in Kerrville, Texas

Sept. 22- Oct. 2

The USA Shooting Team embarked on a historic path that will decide the men and women who will represent their country in London. From Kerrville, Texas, the first shots of the U.S. Olympic Team Trials for Shotgun were recorded on Sept. 23, in Men’s and Women’s Trap. The course of fire for trap and skeet events was 250 targets and 300 targets in Men’s Double Trap. Athletes also had the opportunity to win the title of Fall Selection Champion through an additional finals round. The finals round did not count toward U.S. Olympic Team selection targets.

In Men’s Trap, the top six shooters are separated by only seven targets and with 250 targets yet to shoot, the number one slot is wide open. Leading the way is Jake Turner (Richland, Wash.) with 240 out of 250 targets. Just one target behind is Staff Sergeant Ryan Hadden (Pendleton, Ore., pictured right) with 239 targets. Dustin Anderson (Woodstock, Ga.) is in third with 238 targets followed by Collin Wietfeldt (Hemlock, Mich.) with 236 targets. Garrett Walters (Burr Oak, Mich.) and Jake Wallace (Castaic, Calif.) finished with 233 targets.

The Women’s Trap leader, however, has a surprising six target cushion as the result of an outstanding three day performance. Caitlin Weinheimer (Kerrville, Texas) took a strong lead on her home range with 234 out of 250 targets. Kelsey Zauhar (Lakeville, Minn.), Kayle Browning (Wooster, Ark.) and Corey Cogdell (Eagle River, Alaska) are all tied with 228 targets. Miranda Wilder (Diana, Texas) is in fifth place with 226 targets and Susan Sledge (El Cajon, Calif.) has 222 targets in sixth place.

Glenn Eller (Katy, Texas), emerged as the front runner in Men’s Double Trap. In the first 300 targets of the Trials, Eller nailed 275 targets despite windy conditions the first day. Billy Crawford (Johnstown, Ohio) finished four targets behind Eller with 271 targets. Jeff Holguin (Yorba Linda, Calif.) shot 270 targets for third place and Derek Haldeman (Sunbury, Ohio) was one down with 269 targets. Kelcey Depatis (Donovan, Ill.) broke 256 targets for fifth place and Ian Rupert (Muncy, Pa.) shot 252 targets.

Vincent Hancock (Eatonton, Ga.) is the leader after the first leg in Men’s Skeet. Hancock surged ahead with 246 match targets. BJ Blanchard (Vidor, Texas) is three targets behind with 243 match targets.

In Women’s Skeet, Morgan Craft (Hughesville, Pa.) has a one target lead over Brandy Drozd (Bryan, Texas) with 234 targets. Drozd shot 233 targets to keep the pressure on Craft heading into the second round of Trials. Ali Chiang (Redwood City, Calif.) is in third place with 232 match targets. Caitlin Connor (Winnfield, La.) is right behind her with 230 match targets. Jaiden Grinnell (Port Angeles, Wash.) and Miranda Wilder (Diana, Texas) rounded out the top six competitors with 225 and 221 targets respectively.

The U.S. Olympic Team Trials will conclude May 11 to 23, 2012, at the Tucson Trap and Skeet Club (a USAS Certified Training Center) in Tucson, Ariz. Spectators are welcome to attend and cheer on their favorite aspiring Olympian. USAS would like to wish good luck to the competitors for the second leg as we continue the countdown to London.

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At the 2011 National Junior Olympic Championships for Shotgun, athletes came from far and wide for a chance to take home a National Junior Title. This year's top talent hailed from Michigan, Ohio and Texas; they are all names that have been on the junior radar for the past year and considered competitive on a junior world level. Match Director Nicole Levine commented, “The 2011 National Junior Olympic Championships was a very successful event. With our participant numbers in Double Trap at an all-time high, we are excited to see the growth of this discipline and look forward to what next year will bring.”

Olympic Training Center Resident Athlete Collin Wietfeldt (Hemlock, Mich.) and Rachael Heiden (Clinton, Mich.) reigned supreme in the Men's and Women's Trap events. Wietfeldt shot a match score of 122 out of 125 targets and 21 targets in the final for 143 total targets. Young Matthew Gossett (Springville, Ala.), who will represent the USA at the 2011 Pan American Games, shot 119 match targets and a strong final of 24 targets to tie Wietfeldt at 143 targets. Wietfeldt beat Gossett after one target in the shoot-off. Gossett's strong final helped him gain ground to win the silver medal. The bronze medalist was Austin Odom (Benton, Ark.) with 118 match targets and 20 targets in the final for a total of 138 targets.

Heiden, who is currently the fourth ranked Women's Trap shooter in the world, separated herself from the competition with 120 out of 125 match targets. She sealed the deal with 21 targets in the final. Colorado local Janessa Beaman (Elbert, Colo.) scored the silver medal with 112 match targets and 21 targets in the final. Just one target behind was this year's National Champion, Kayle Browning (Wooster, Ark.) with 112 match targets and 20 targets in the final.

Billy Crawford (Johnstown, Ohio) brought his "A" Game to Men's Double Trap with a seven target cushion on his gold medal victory. Crawford shot 140 match targets and 47 targets in the final for the uncontested 187 target win. World Clay Target Championship teammate Ian Rupert (Muncy, Pa.) won the silver medal with 135 match targets and 45 targets in the final for 180 total targets. Olympic Training Center Resident Athlete and Michigan-born Garrett Walters (Burr Oak, Mich.) shot 124 match targets and 44 targets in the final for 168 total targets and the bronze medal.

Wrapping up the excitement with duels for the gold were TJ Bayer (College Station, Texas) and Ian Rupert (Muncy, Pa.) in Men's Skeet. Bayer shot 25 out of 25 targets and 58 targets in the final for the gold medal. Rupert shot 24 out of 25 targets and 53 targets in the final for the silver medal. In Women's Skeet, Jaiden Grinnell (Laramie, Wyo.), Brandy Drozd (Cortlandt, N.Y.) and Morgan Craft (College Station, Texas) battled for the gold medal. Grinnell shot 25 out of 25 targets and 71 targets in the final for the gold medal. Drozd shot 24 out of 25 targets and 69 targets in the final for the silver medal. Craft shot 24 out of 25 targets and 68 targets in the final for the bronze medal.

Women's Skeet (L to R): Jaiden Grinnell, Brandy Drozd and Morgan Craft.

Men's Skeet (L to R): Dustin Perry, TJ Bayer and Kyle Johnson.

Women's Trap (L to R): Janessa Beaman, Rachael Heiden and Kayle Browning.

Men's Double Trap (L to R): Ian Rupert, Billy Crawford and Garrett Walters.
Texas) and Brandy Drozd (Bryan, Texas), the new Men’s and Women’s Skeet NJOSC Champions. Bayer shot 124 match targets and 22 targets in the final to tie Dustin Perry (Crockett, Texas) at 146 targets. Perry shot 121 match targets and a perfect final of 25 straight targets for an opportunity to win gold. In a four-target shoot-off, Bayer won the gold medal and Perry the silver medal. The bronze medalist was Kyle Johnson (Phoenix, Ariz.) with 120 match targets and 24 targets in the final for a total of 144 targets.

Drozd and Olympic Training Center Resident Athlete Jaiden Grinnell (Port Angeles, Wash.) put on a show with a shoot-off for the gold medal. Drozd entered the final with 111 targets and hit a solid 23 targets in the final. Grinnell shot 112 match targets and 22 targets in the final to tie Drozd at 134 total targets. In a five-target shoot-off, Drozd won the gold medal and Grinnell finished with the silver medal. The bronze medalist was Morgan Craft (Hughsville, Texas) with 110 match targets and 23 targets in the final for a total of 133 targets.

These talented junior men and women are some of the athletes that may very well represent the USA in the 2012 or 2016 Olympic Games. Given the growth of Men’s Double Trap and the always solid numbers from the Skeet and Trap athletes, USA Shooting looks forward to the many world-class performances these athletes are capable of in the years to come. USAS would like to thank our tireless volunteers for their assistance on making the match a great success and congratulate all those who participated in the 2011 National Junior Olympic Championships.
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Let's Make Good Great

By Sergeant George Norton

In the sport of competitive shooting, we always strive to find more points. We strive for excellence which, in turn, means perfection. Many think of perfection as a very daunting task. In our sport, it means to execute at a level that is without flaw or distraction. That is a heavy burden for all competitors, especially junior shooters, to handle.

All of these elements make it very easy for junior shooters to become overwhelmed and may cause them to concentrate on the wrong ways to improve. During this article, I will discuss fundamental elements that make a perfect shooter and break everything down to its simplest form. I believe that every shooter, from junior all the way up to elite, can improve their scores by concentrating on a single element and simplifying it.

In our amazing and complex sport, there are many fundamentals that we, as shooters, need to work on. At clinics, I ask what these fundamentals are; I am not surprised that the majority of juniors and coaches know them. The fundamentals of shooting should be common knowledge to all participants in the sport. These basic fundamentals include steady position, trigger control, breathing, sight alignment and mental discipline. Everywhere we turn, we can learn about the basic fundamentals and how to apply them.

There are books, clinics, lectures and organizations dedicated to the fundamentals and the proper way to apply them. Coaches can even take classes on how to train their juniors so they can help themselves. After teaching countless classes and clinics on the fundamentals, one thing that I have learned is that every shooter and every coach is different. As coaches, no matter how talented we are, if we apply the fundamentals of shooting the same way to every junior shooter, we will only help the few that are like us. Likewise, if a junior shooter is being instructed on too many fundamentals at one time, they may well become overwhelmed and frustrated. Everyone is different. Therefore, coaches should strive to apply the fundamentals differently to every shooter according to personal need and growth. With that being said, how can we, as coaches and juniors, look to simplify the approach of fundamentals (without overwhelming) to make a decent shooter good and a good shooter great? We need to break everything down to its simplest form.

Whether you are an elite shooter or an up-and-coming junior, every shooter knows how to apply basic fundamentals: how to get into a proper position, align the sights, squeeze the trigger and follow through. The problem that I find is that if shooters do not perform well, we tend to over-analyze our fundamental areas. We adjust our position, change equipment and before we know it, we are starting over instead of building on a solid foundation.

After one bad performance, we decide that those years of perfecting a strong position were a waste and then start from scratch. As a coach, we must stick with our knowledge of shooting. We must not let them change anything fundamental. As a shooter, do not waste your time or money on new equipment—you are only hurting yourself and your wallet.

Break down the issues you are having with the fundamentals to the simplest form. Once you do, you will be able find good shots and bad shots. You will improve your execution to take your shot confidently and will not second guess whether or not your shot is center. As shooters and as coaches, we must concentrate on execution of shots. By taking current position and equipment, and breaking down the fundamentals to just execution, I can confidently tell you that decent can become good and good can become great.

So what training methods can we apply to achieve good or great? First, we must become honest with ourselves. We must be able to take a shot, with proper follow through, and, honestly, say that shot was a center ten. On the contrary, if at any time we shoot on the move, the bull was not center with the aperture or anything else that would cause us to have a stray shot; we must be honest with ourselves and say that it was not good enough.

Secondly, we cannot waste shots. In a recent clinic with the USAMU, Staff Sergeant Michael McPhail made an amazing comment during a class. He stated, “If you ever know you’re about to have a poor shot and take it anyway, you’re wasting ammo.” When we lose balance, the hold is poor or even...
if the wind changes outdoors, we need to release the shot and reset. Finally, we need to train to apply these two changes of honesty and not wasting shots. The coach of the USAMU International Rifle Team, Tom Tamas, developed a training method related to such problems called “The Game.”

The exercise can be performed not only with rifle shooters but pistol as well. The objective of this training exercise is to see how many well executed shots you can perform in a row. This is where being honest is very important. Only the shooter themselves truly know how well they are executing their shots and it is left up to the coach to encourage good execution. As you complete well executed shots, you are able to move to the next level, seeing how many levels you can attain. Once a shot has a poor execution, the shooter must start over at level one. During this whole time score should not be taken into account, only execution.

I can personally say that this exercise alone has helped me improve my scores. I have not changed equipment, positions or over-analyzed anything else. Once I found decent positions, I “played” the game over and over again and have only reached level 14. I have learned that not concentrating on all of the overwhelming aspects of our sport but breaking it all down to execution has helped my performance and overall. So in conclusion, coaches and shooters should find decent positions, stay comfortable and don’t become overwhelmed by all that can be changed and adjusted. Work on the execution of the shot and we can change decent to good and good to great. Don’t forget to stay Army Strong.

The problem that I find is that if shooters do not perform well, we tend to over-analyze our fundamental areas. We adjust our position, change equipment and before we realize, we are starting over instead of building on a solid foundation.

The U.S. Olympic Team Trials for Airgun are up next from Dec. 1-4 in Anniston, Ala. at the Civillian Marksmanship Program South facility. Cheer on your favorite athletes and catch updates on USAS’ Facebook, Twitter and website.

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S
ilver has become a frustrating color for the USA Shooting Team's Eric Uptagrafft. Earlier in 2010, he reemerged as a front runner at the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup in Sydney, Australia. Uptagrafft, who won a silver and bronze during 2010 and jumped around between the top ten rankings, issued a challenge to the rest of the world in Sydney.

He erupted with near perfection—599 match points and 104.2 points in the final to finish just two-tenths of a point behind the gold medalist to claim the silver. Not only was this his first major international match since his back surgery, but his wife, Petty Officer First Class Sandra Uptagrafft, was deployed for nearly a year in dangerous situations in Afghanistan. He managed his recovery and the majority of the major holidays without Sandra.

With his wife home safe and sound before his second World Cup in Changwon, Korea, Eric Uptagrafft was ready for action. In Changwon, he was eight-tenths of a point behind gold yet again. The silver medal pattern continued at the World Cup Final with 599 match points after returning from a brief deployment to Afghanistan (Uptagrafft is a Soldier in the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit). With 102.8 points in the final, he finished one point shy of first for his third silver medal of the year—and fourth international silver in two seasons.

Frustrating would be a good word for piles of silver winking back at Uptagrafft; however, his slew of silver also earned him a nomination to the U.S. Olympic Team (pending approval by the U.S. Olympic Committee). One could also assert that He has seen the podium in five of ten international appearances in the past two seasons, or that eight of those ten competitions included a final appearance. With impressive averages like that, it’s hard to dispute the color of the medal. Though he was just shy of gold on several occasions, Uptagrafft is like a lion waiting to pounce on its prey—the Olympic Games, of course.

The battle for gold lies at the top with friend Sergei Martynov of Belarus. Martynov was the 2000 and 2004 Olympic Games bronze medalist and finished eighth in 2008. He has held the number one Men’s 50m Rifle Prone ranking for the entire 2011 season, and recently claimed the gold medal at the World Cup Final. Despite their...
friendly relationship, the focus is on each shot when they approach the line. “You can’t translate competition into personal relationships,” said Martynov, because “sport is sport and you wouldn’t have friends in 50 years.”

Uptagrafft is hot on his heels as the number two prone shooter in the world. “He’s [Uptagrafft] one of the best shooters in the world in prone,” said Martynov, “I’ve won from him and he’s won from me before, it turns out this year I’ve been better than him.” Next year, however, Martynov might not be so lucky.

Two near-perfect rounds of 599 points in an international competition in one season is no accident, they are the result of countless hours of training and preparation. When he is on the range, he’s a verifiable scientist. Every move, every slight adjustment to his position is calculated and it doesn’t end there—round upon round are sent downrange to test different lots of ammunition, equipment is tested to meet exacting, though not easily defined requirements.

“When I shoot in London next summer, I will have the best rifle/ammo combination possible… hopefully the best in the world,” commented Uptagrafft. U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit teammate Sergeant First Class Jason Parker (Columbus, Ga.) describes Eric as a “great competitor. There are few people that have the desire, talent and mental toughness to become an Olympic Champion and he has proven that he is one of the best in the world.”

National Rifle Coach Major Dave Johnson commented, “He’s in rare and elite company. Silver can be trying, but at the same time Eric has established himself as a shooter you expect in the top three.” For now, his future holds box after box of ELEY Tenex as he prepares for London.

“I’m working hard polishing my technique so hopefully I can get those last few tenths of a point that might just make a difference.” Come July of 2012, he will be on a plane for training camp and then the main stage at the Royal Artillery Barracks as his silver successes sprout gold ambitions.
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Are you Fundamentally Sound?

By Olympic Training Center Resident Athlete, John Mullins

One of the key steps to a successful career in the international shooting world is strong fundamentals. Many shooters currently competing can improve their scores by some basic improvements to their setup. These particular techniques are intended for right-handed shooters in the international trap discipline. In general the left-handed shooter will do the opposite of such references. This article will discuss basic foot position, leg position, weight distribution, use of your hips and gun mount.

When you first approach the shooting station, a good foot position is essential for everything that leads up to the shot. Completing a good shot is a difficult task without a firm base. The basic foot position is a 45 degree line from the front on the shooting station to the back of the shooting station. The shooter’s toes should be placed on the line; this enables the shooter to have full mobility to any target possible. If the shooter is having problems with the right-hand targets, he or she should move the right foot further back and vice versa for the left-hand targets. In the picture to the left, you will see that my foot position is along the imaginary 45 degree line on the shooting station. Generally, my right foot is positioned back from the line allowing me a little more mobility to the right-hand targets.

Weight distribution is another key factor in enabling the shooter to move to the target. A shooter’s weight should be placed on the balls of his or her feet and not on the heels. With the weight on the balls of the feet, ease
Canterbury Trap have developed another world first, a fully automated Bunker system that only requires one shooter to set up and operate. The Canterbury Auto Trench replicates a traditional 15 trap ISSF layout with simple push button controls for set up and changing between ISSF programs. The system comes complete with Voice release and control console. Additional features include multi positional practice modes and ABT/Continental/Wobble trap facility.

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Canterbury AutoTrench

of movement in the legs is allowed. The majority of weight, around 60 to 70 percent, should be on your leading or front foot. Having your weight more forward allows the shooter to move to the target easier. The knees should be bent and not locked. If the knees are locked, it restricts the movement of the shooter to the target. My knees in the picture to the right are slightly bent to allow easier movement to any target.

The angles of the targets require the shooter to move with his or her hips. It is very hard to move the gun to the target with just your arms, and by using your hips it allows for a more consistent motion to the target. The initial movement to the target must be made by the hips. The basic principle of using your legs is different for everybody, so minor differences will be found in your own style.

With your body position set, the shooter can now move on to the gun mount. When a shooter mounts the gun, it is vital that the mount be replicated consistently throughout the competition. There are many different ways to mount the gun; everybody has their own unique mount that works for them.

Once the gun is mounted, other fundamentals takeover. One of the basic principles of trap shooting is the use of the right hand. The right hand drives the gun to the target. In international skeet the left hand drives to the target. In trap shooting, the left hand should be loose enough to allow the right hand to control the movement of the gun to the target.

Often times if the left hand overpowers the right hand, the gun will feel out of control. When the gun moves out of control the quality of the shot is affected. Throughout my career as a competitor, I have struggled with this habit over and over. One way to help overcome this problem is by curling your pinky finger under the forearm which does not allow a tight grip to the forearm. If your left hand cannot hold the forearm tight it will have a harder time overtaking your right hand.

These basic fundamentals can improve your shooting game and can also be integrated into other various forms of shotgun sports. One of the main reasons for having these fundamentals is not necessarily for when everything is working and your scores are good, rather when you’re struggling to break targets.

Basic fundamentals will help pull a shooter through the rough times of a competition by providing a strong base. The main benefit of this is that when a problem comes to light it can be fixed fast and efficiently, thereby limiting the targets that could be missed. With bad fundamentals there is the possibility that more than one issue can arise and the fix will be too complicated during a match. Putting several of these techniques to use will improve your scores in the match and over time.

Make sure to bend your knees to allow ease of movement in the path to the target.

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I say this because another endeavor that I also have a great deal of expertise with, the art of hand engraving, has many of the same sort of people involved. Engraving is also a rather esoteric skill that like Olympic Shooting has specialized equipment that requires a great deal of practice to excel in it. I have been a practitioner, counselor and teacher in both areas for many years and see many beginners who attempt to short cut their way to success with high dollar equipment purchases, just like my airgun customers who want to buy a gun.

So what is the best airgun? For those without one and looking to invest a substantial amount of cash, they want a cut and dried answer, like “A Feinwaltschutz XYZ or Steyrinipard 89TEN.” If only life were that simple. It’s a lot like buying a car, and what is the best for you? Just like most autos made today are extremely reliable and perform at speeds well beyond legal limits, any 10 meter airgun is going to be accurate and reliable. Anschütz, Feinwerkbau, Morini, Pardini, Steyr, Tau and Walther all have good products. Though any company occasionally may have teething problems with a new model, on the whole, they all make a solid gun. So if reliability and accuracy are not discriminating factors, what are?

There are many variables that define what best suits your purposes. Planned usage, budgets, filling logistics and ergonomics are all factors that must be considered in determining what the best gun is for you. My idea of the best airgun might not be the best gun for you, based on any of the listed criteria. So let’s examine some of these and see what you need.

**Planned Usage**: What is your goal for this purchase? Is it for occasional recreational shooting? Just about anything will do, even something heavy or awkward or hard to cock. Do you want to participate in a local club or league? You can certainly look into used vintage models to save some cash. Even 40 year old guns can be as reliable and as accurate as the top line models today.

Are you thinking you are going to make a serious attempt at excelling in this sport such as a college scholarship or even the U.S. Olympic Team? In this case it makes sense to take advantage of the latest technology if...
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“A parent who calls wanting to buy their 10-year-old son a full size Steyr LP10 because it has won Olympic Gold medals is not doing him a favor when he really needs something small and light that fits his hands and doesn’t fatigue his young muscles.”
Sergeant Glenn Eller (Katy, Texas) is no stranger to the dedication and training it takes to reach the top. Eller was the Men’s Double Trap gold medalist at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, China. After a few setbacks in early 2011, Eller is breaking through the world rankings to return to the top ten. At the 2011 International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Clay Target Championships in early September in Belgrade, Serbia, Eller proved that he’s back and better than ever. Eller nailed 145 out of 150 match targets to tie three other shooters for a spot in the final. With just two shooters remaining in the shoot-off—Eller and Ahmed Almaktoum of the United Arab Emirates—the tension grew by the minute. The duo continued for 20 targets, 30 targets and finally Almaktoum dropped his thirty-sixth target and Eller advanced to the final. This unprecedented shoot-off is an unofficial record (the ISSF does not monitor this statistic for official records) for a shoot-off in qualification, breaking Vasily Mosin’s previous 30 target shoot-off at the 2010 World Championships. Eller maintained pace in the final with 45 out of 50 targets to score 193 total targets. Tied with Russia’s Vitaly Fokeev for the bronze medal, Eller kept it short and sweet, topping Fokeev after four targets and claiming the bronze medal. USA Shooting would like to congratulate the Winchester Athlete of the Month, Glenn Eller, on his return to the top ten in the world and wish him success for the 2012 season.
A total of 92 Progressive Position Pistol (PPP) athletes squared off at the Civilian Marksmanship Program’s (CMP) South location in Anniston, Ala., for the Junior Olympic PPP National Championships. The two-day competition was co-sponsored by USA Shooting and the NRA. CMP South provided a fantastic all-electronic 80 point range and a range operations team that delivered a flawless event.

The PPP match competition is a precision pistol event. Multi-shot pistols may be used, but only a single pellet may be loaded at any given moment. The pistols must be .177 caliber (4.5 mm), and use compressed air or compressed, non-flammable gas (such as CO2) for propellant.

There were 29 athletes competing in the Basic Supported category, eight in the Standing Supported category and 54 competing in the International Standing category which is the Olympic air pistol event (off handed, unsupported). Also, there were seven Basic Supported Teams, seven Mixed Teams and eight International Standing Teams.

Basic Supported - Individual

In the first day of competitions for Basic Supported, Jack Leverett III (Bainbridge, Ga.), lead the pack with 397 points, Lyndsey Parker (Salem, Mo.), was in second place with 393 points and Henry Leverett (Bainbridge, Ga.), was in third with 391 points.

Leverett III maintained his first place lead the second day of the match with 396 points for an aggregate of 792. Miles Sinagra (Amite, La.), moved from fourth place into second place by shooting 396 points for 785 total points. Parker began her second day in sixth place, but a solid 390 points gave her an overall aggregate of 783 for third place.

Standing Supported - Individual

In the first day of competitions for Standing Supported, Brianna Kinard (Newberry, S.C.), and Layne Smith (Woodstock, Ala.), lead the pack with 343 and 341 points respectively. Alexa Halverson (Colorado Springs, Colo.), finished in third place with 324 points.

On the second day Kinard increased her lead with 347 points from the day’s match. She finished with 690 total points for the gold medal. Smith posted 330 points on the second day for an aggregate of 671 points to finish with the silver medal. Third place went to Halverson with a total of 649 points. Bridget Mullins (Cross Junction, Va.), posted a strong second day second place score of 332, but her aggregate score wasn’t enough and had to settle for fourth place overall.

International Standing (unsupported) – Individual Men’s Division

In the men's division, Brian Kim (Garden Grove, Calif.), took the lead with 368 points on the first day. Thomas Ricks (Crystal Spring, Miss.), and Andy Choi (Cerritos, Calif.), were close behind him with 363 points apiece.

The second day of the men's event was exciting as Choi, Clayton Hinton (Canton, Mo.), and Nathan Switzer (Newport News, Va.), all shooting 364 points. Although Kim's second day score dropped to 359 points, he tied Andy Choi's aggregate of 727 points, putting him in a tie for gold going into the finals. Ricks was close behind with 726 total points. The men's top eight for the final included: Choi, Kim, Ricks, Hinton, Switzer, Miles Bewley (Tulsa, Okla.), Garrett Rayborn (Tylertown, Miss.), and Joshua Gelberger (Stow, Mass.).

Thomas Ricks came on strong with a
final of 95.7 points, for an aggregate score of 821.7 points, the gold medal and a slot on the USAS National Junior Team. With 94.4 points in the final, Kim came within three-tenths of a point from Ricks' and walked away with the silver medal. Hinton shot 95.3 points in the final for a total of 819.3 points and the bronze medal.

International Standing (unsupported) - Individual Women's Division

In the women's division, Darian Shenk (Annville, Pa.) and Ashely Kim (Corona, Calif.) were running neck-and-neck with duo 360s on the first day. Kathryn Kananen (Florissant, Colo.) kept the pressure on with 359 points.

On day two, Shenk separated herself from the pack with 365 points and taking the lead headed into the final. Janice Choi (Los Angeles, Calif.) came from behind with 363 points, but her two day aggregate was not enough beat Kananen's aggregate of 720 points. The women's top eight for the final included: Shenk, Kananen, Hannah Black (Yorktown, Va.), Choi, Kim, Elizabeth Lutz (Annville, Pa.) and Isabel Macaulay (Concord, Mass.). Shenk demonstrated her champion form with a fantastic 99.9 points in the final for a guaranteed gold medal and USAS National Junior Team slot. She shot an aggregate score of 824.9 points. Kananen maintained second place with an aggregate of 810.5 points, closely followed by Black with an aggregate of 804.3 points taking the bronze medal.

USA Shooting wants to thank all the parents and coaches for their dedication to the sport and their shooting athletes. USA Shooting also thanks the CMP for an enjoyable competition and looks forward to next year in Anniston.
What is your all-time favorite movie?
Miracle, the story about the 1980 hockey team.

What is your favorite book?
I really enjoyed Alaska’s Wolf Man by Jim Rearden and Beyond Band of Brothers by Major Dick Winters.

How old were you when you started shooting?
I started shooting guns in general when I was roughly 6 or 7 years old. I started competing when I was 15 years old.

What is the best advice you have ever received?
I received a ton of it over the years from some very wise and wonderful people. I can’t really narrow it down to one thing. Also, I can’t say there is one piece of advice that was the answer to everything. My mom always told me that if you want something bad enough, you can do it. Anything is possible. If there’s a will, there’s a way. You just have to find the way.

What do you like about shooting?
There are lots of things about being an international shooter that I absolutely love. That’s why I’m still doing it. It’s endlessly intriguing for me to work on figuring out how to physically hold the rifle more still so I’m able to shoot tens all the time, or nearly all the time. There are so many pieces of the puzzle in rifle, it is fun for me. There is always something to work on. Also, I really enjoy helping others in the sport—seeing their excitement when they improve or learn something new is so rewarding for me.

What advice can you pass on to youth shooters?
If you truly love to shoot and want to try to go far with it, give it everything you have. If you want it bad enough, your dreams can come true. You just have to be smart enough to figure out the path. There will be bumps in the road, but never forget that the sun is coming up tomorrow and you will get another shot at it.

What are your goals?
In shooting, I’ve always wanted to be one of the best in history. That’s what keeps me going. I’ve already done a lot in my career, but I believe there’s more I can do. I still don’t think I’ve seen my very best. I want to try to “figure the game out” the best I can and, someday, share that knowledge with other athletes.

What has shooting done for you?
Shooting has done nearly everything for me. Here is a very, very short list: it helped me grow up and mature quickly, be a better student, pay for my undergraduate and graduate degrees, see the world and meet my wife. I’ve met so many amazing people who have touched my life in a very positive way because of shooting and I’ve been fortunate to be able to do something I love nearly every day for the last 15 years.

You were recently nominated to your third Olympic team. How are you preparing for London?
I think I know most of the areas where I can improve. I’m constantly trying to figure out how I can fill in those gaps and then doing the work to get better.

What is your greatest accomplishment?
To be honest, it probably has more to do with what I didn’t achieve. Of course, winning World Championships and the Olympics were very big accomplishments, but what I had to deal with after my mishaps in Athens and Beijing were monumental. I was able to answer the questions, handle the criticism, learn from these situations and continue to compete and put myself in the same situations again. I never gave up. That’s bigger than any medal I could ever win.
DO YOU HAVE ANY HOLIDAY TRADITIONS THAT YOU CELEBRATE AS A FAMILY?
Absolutely! The main one is, of course, Christmas. In Czech, the main celebration is on Dec. 24. Dinner consists of fish soup, then fried fish (over there, it’s always carp) and maybe fried chicken, potato salad and then a special sweet bread called “vanocka” (pronounced “va-noch-ka”). In Czech, the baby Jesus comes in the evening on the 24th to leave presents and we open them after dinner. The following morning, we see what Santa Claus left in our stockings. For dinner, we make ham and my mom’s baked beans.

WHAT’S ON YOUR CHRISTMAS LIST?
Already?? Honestly, every year I have a terrible time figuring out what to put on my Christmas list, so asking me now in October is even more difficult! I’m not the type of person to think much about putting things on a list so people can get it for me. I like to be surprised.

WHAT’S IN YOUR FUTURE: SHORT AND LONG TERM?
Short-term, most of what occupies my time is preparing for London. Long-term, I’m not sure. My wife, Katy, and I have some things to think about over the next year to figure where life’s going to take us next. I’d like to continue shooting after London, but that depends on several things.

PEOPLE MIGHT BE SURPRISED TO FIND OUT THAT . . .
I got into competitive shooting by accident. I had no idea that it was a sport, much less an Olympic sport. I first started when I learned it could be a way to help pay for college if I received a scholarship for a college rifle team.

Double Take Answers
1. The ISSF Jury Member’s name patch on his vest was removed.
2. The Perazzi logo’s background color was changed from red to black.
3. The colors on the ribbon of Kim Rhode’s medal were inverted.
4. The buttons are missing from the shirt of the man on the left.
5. The date in the backdrop was switched from 2011 to 2010.
6. The flag on Chinese athlete’s jacket was changed from red to blue.

Junior Talent!

Artwork submitted by pistol athlete Kathryn Kananen.
Email katie.yergensen@usashooting.org to submit yours (.jpg or .pdf only please)!
“Everyone has the will to win, but not everyone has the will to prepare to win.”
Test your visual skills: there are six differences between the top and bottom pictures of Kim Rhode (R) on the podium at the 2011 ISSF World Clay Target Championships. Good luck! Answers on page 36.
**PHONE**

*Type of cell phone?* I was using a really cool Droid Incredible 2, but that got stolen in Germany so I got downgraded to the original Droid.

*Average texts per day?* I probably send around 100 texts a day... There are a lot of people I send a quick note to, and a few people I talk to all day between classes and practice and anything else I’m doing (don’t text in class!).

*Always on or when is it turned off?* Always on, except during a match, I don’t want to miss out on something or be unavailable in an emergency.

**MUSIC**

*What is your music system?* (ipod, mp3, etc.)? I either use Pandora on my phone, or my ipod which needs updated with some new music!

*An artist or group that you like that we wouldn’t guess?* I have one of the most random music collections including Frank Sinatra, George Strait, Atmosphere and probably ten other artists you would never guess.

*Best movie soundtrack ever?* 10 Things I Hate About You, goes perfectly with the movie.

*Favorite artist to sing along to?* Katy Perry! She’s crazy like me!

**TELEVISION**

*Favorite sport to watch on TV?* Football!

*Cartoon you watched as a kid and your favorite character?* Definitely Doug from Nickelodeon, and my favorite character was Helga. Or that dude that breathed in her ear all the time.

**INTERNET**

*Website you visit most often?* Google, I’m always looking stuff up!

*Number of times a day you check your email?* It goes straight to my phone so it never ends

*Item you are most likely to buy online?* Clothes, I love finding stuff online that other people won’t have where I live.

**VIDEO GAMES**

*Favorite video game?* Mario Kart. Got to keep it old-school.

*Game System?* Nintendo 64 (See above)

*Game you’d create, starring yourself as the lead?* Definitely a racing game with obstacles to run over or avoid like shopping bags, math exams and bills.
72% of all .22 World Cup Medals were won with **ELEY** Ammunition

More 2012 Olympic quota places won with **ELEY** Ammunition than any other brand

**ELEY** World Cup 2011 Medal Wins

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CREATING OLYMPIC DREAMS SINCE 1896. THIS HOLIDAY SEASON GET THE MOST BANG FOR YOUR BUCK BY GIVING THE GIFT OF A USAS MEMBERSHIP!

IT'S THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING ALL YEAR LONG!