

ON TOP OF THE WORLD



It wasn't just the Texas countryside that was on fire during the last few days of April – George Digweed too was scorching his way around the National Shooting Complex in some style on the way to another World title. Don Brunt was there to see the action unfold.

This year, for the first time ever, two World English Sporting titles were up for grabs. It was in February that the International Clay Target Shooting Federation (ICTSF) staged their World Championship in New Zealand – won by George Digweed. In late April the NSCA held their World Championship in San Antonio – attracting over 600 competitors from the US, Canada, England, Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Sweden, Norway, Venezuela and South Africa. No surprise then to see Digweed



BRAD KIDD (2ND), WORLD CHAMPION GEORGE DIGWEED AND MIKE WILGUS (3RD).

take the top spot once again for an impressive 2011 double World Sporting win and his 19th World title.

The five day Championship would see plenty of preliminary action spread over the 670 acres of the NSCA facility. Proceedings kicked off on Wednesday (27th April) with the Remington sponsored 100 target FITASC event that ran for five days down on the lower part of the complex that offered better terrain for the target setters than that available at previous Nationals and World Championships.

The scoreboard indicated that the majority of the 286 competitors found Parcours 1 (7 x 25 straights)

and 2 (6 x 25 straights) to be a little more shooter friendly than the more technically difficult Parcours 2 (2 x 25 straights) and 3 (2 x 25 straights).

Despite the efforts of the target setters, the strengthening wind conspired to make things more awkward for competitors and course managers alike. Richard Faulds from England, not seen shooting in the US for some years, posted a 90 on day one – an impressive effort considering the 30mph wind coming in from the north that pushed the targets away from the hoops.

Other big names from both sides of the Atlantic tried and failed to get to grips with the course – the weather and winds always seemed to intervene.

Stringing together a big score proved to be very frustrating. Hunter Milligan and Diane Sorantino put in solid scores of 91 in the concurrents, which was then bettered by David Radulovich (92). Later in the week numerous scores of 93 were posted – and then came a 94 from Ben Husthwaite, matched by young Canadian Shawn Stitt. A combination of raw talent and a gap in the weather then allowed Brandon Powell to snatch the win after finishing on an impressive 96 (25, 25, 21 and 25).

Diane Sorantino's 91 was enough to take the Ladies title, while Shawn Stitt (94) collected the Junior trophy ahead of England's Sam Green. John Woolley (90) won Veterans ahead of Steve Middleditch and Michael Taylor cleaned up in Super Veterans with an 86.

Federal Pre-lim

Down on the Browning range the Federal Pre-lim was proving to be popular with competitors, some saying after the weekend that they preferred this course to those of the Main Event. Having said that, much of the course consisted of fairly close range transitioning targets – full choke would definitely have been a disadvantage. 2010 World Sporting Champion Ben Husthwaite finished on a 93 along with George Digweed and Jon Kruger. This was eventually beaten by Armando Perez (3rd – 94) and again by Richard Faulds (RU – 95). Despite a feeling amongst many that the Englishman's score would be enough, Pat Lieske obviously hadn't been listening to the clubhouse pundits and put in a 96 to take a well deserved win. Another Englishman, Graham Stirzaker, took the Veterans win with 91, well clear of David Schmidt in second and Brian DuQuesnay third. Diane Sorantino (84) collected the gold in Ladies, Janet McDougall narrowly missing out on 83 while Becky Bream was third with 79. Abel Spire (90) won Juniors, Codie Lindsay (82) took Sub-Juniors, Bill Ray (76) won Senior Super Veterans and Bob Davis (86) topped Super Veterans.

5-Stand

The course setters had their work cut out with the Zoli 5-Stand event, running along the bottom end of the complex on the skeet ranges. The terrain was pretty much devoid of features, a few towers being the only way of introducing any real interest to the course. While the target setters did their best, it's unlikely to go down as being one of their finest efforts. Equally unimpressed were the vendors. Because the

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PARCOURS 2 AND 3 WERE THE MORE TECHNICAL OF THE FITASC LAYOUTS.

The terrain was pretty much devoid of features, a few towers being the only way of introducing any real interest to the 5-Stand.



5-Stand had moved from in front of Vendors Row, they experienced a lack of passing foot traffic meaning that it was a lean weekend for them. No doubt they will be pressing for the event to be held on its usual site next time around.

All layouts shot harder than expected, no doubt due to the wind and the problem of distance perception on the flat and exposed terrain. Lone 25 straights on layouts 1, 2 and 3 came from David Radulovich, Nadim Nasir and George Digweed respectively, while layout 4 saw 25 straights from Joey Bolton and Kirk Cleere. The general degree of difficulty is reflected in the fact that only 10 of the 372 competitors shot scores over 90 and 49 Master class shooters recorded scores of 70 or less.

Randy Barrington (94) did an excellent job of coming to grips with the course to finish tied at the top of Master class and with a comfortable margin in Veterans ahead of Pete Hendrick and David Walker. Sam Bennett (83) won Super Veterans, Ron Shafer (71) was top Senior Super Veteran and Shawn Stitt (92) took the Junior title after going head to head with David Radulovich. Jenni Clark (83) won Ladies. Barrington's 94

looked like he might be destined for an historic 5-Stand HOA, but he had to square up to Wendell Cherry and George Digweed to break the tie. Few bet against Digweed in that kind of situation and sure enough, the multiple World Champion finished on top with Cherry taking Silver and Barrington delighted to have won Bronze.

Small Gauge

The ever popular small gauge events saw Michael Coleman (95) take the 20g, William Walton (92) the 28g event and Scott Robertson (94) was the impressive .410 winner, eight targets ahead of Carl Skip Zapffe. Small gauge HOA went to Robertson on a combined score of 276, which was 18 targets ahead of RU Jon Kruger.

The Super Sporting event was also well supported, with 294 entrants taking on the 50 target course. Doug Vine (48) took top honors, two targets up on Zach Kienbaum. Class winners included Sergey Aleksandrov (AA - 45), Richard Horn (A - 40), Luigi Torchia (B - 36), Shawn Lovelady (C - 41), B. Hurtado Gutierrez (D - 33) and Ruben Martinez (E - 25).



Main Event

The two courses of the 200 bird Main Event each had their own character. The Winchester/Browning layout was the most varied of the two with a good mix of presentations – some out at 45 yards – that required instinctive shooting for the closer targets with the more distant presentations needing technical ability.

The Beretta/LaPorte layout was quite 'trappy' in nature, with some 40 out of the 100 presentations being quartering and going away – particularly on stations 1-6. It might have been that the target setter had restricted

The wind had been a factor all week, despite blue skies and warm temperatures

space for 15 stations – or perhaps that’s what he intended. Either way, there were conflicting opinions among the shooters, but the Winchester/Browning course edged it over Beretta/LaPorte when it came to entertainment value.

By Saturday evening it was time to let the scores do the talking and Cory Kruse was shouting pretty loudly, with a 96 on Winchester/Browning, matched by Mike Wilgus. Bradd Kidd, Byron Justice and Pre-lim winner

Pat Lieske were all close behind. Out on the other course, George Digweed was looking like a man on a mission, slamming in a 97 to lead the event overnight.

The wind had been a factor all week, despite blue skies and warm temperatures – and things looked no different on Sunday when George Digweed arrived on the Winchester/Browning course at 8.00am. His 95 looked good, but had he known what the weather would bring later that day he would surely have been nervous.

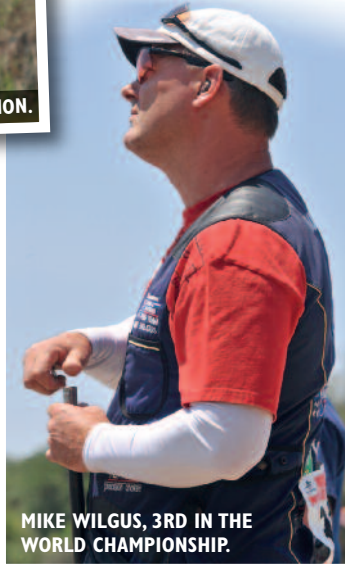
As late morning slipped into early afternoon, the wind switched through 180 degrees and became stronger. Those Beretta/LaPorte targets that had been blown out and away from the stations on Saturday were now considerably closer in than the course setter would have intended – and scores on the 2 o’clock flight were expected to be on the high side. So it proved, one station in particular suffering from targets being blown in from what had been a long teal to now landing almost on the firing point! You didn’t need to be a Harvard man to work out what the consequences would be and several competitors made best use of the opportunity to bag themselves a big score.

Brad Kidd (191), Pat Lieske (191), Byron Justice (189), Cory Kruse (188) and Mike Wilgus (188) all finished strongly on the last rotation of Sunday to make the cut for the Super Final alongside George Digweed (192). The fact that all, except Digweed, had shot on that 2.00pm Beretta/LaPorte flight sparked conversations all round the ground to the effect that perhaps it was time to look, once again, at squadding all the top shooters on the same flight.

By the time the concurrent shoot-offs were finished and the Super Final was ready to start, the



ASHLEIGH HAFLEY LADIES WORLD CHAMPION.



MIKE WILGUS, 3RD IN THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP.



PRE-LIM EVENT		
CH	PAT LIESKE	96
RU	RICHARD FAULDS	95
3RD	ARMANDO PEREZ	94
M1	JON KRUGER	93
M2	BEN HUSTHWAITE	93
M3	GEORGE DIGWEED	93
AA1	CODIE LINDSAY	82
AA2	ANDREW SEAMAN	82
AA3	JODY KIRKLAND	82
A1	THOMAS SCHLEIER	78
A2	TRACE DUHON	77
A3	NICK CLEMENT	75
B1	SERGIO CAVAZOS	71
B2	KENNETH CAMPBELL	71
B3	GARZA VILLARREA	70
C1	HECTOR WILLS	79
C2	LARTHEL OLSEN	73
C3	EDDIE BLAZEK	71
D1	ROMAN SAAVEDRA	75
D2	CONNOR GORSUCH	69
D3	B. HURTADO GUTIERR	67
E1	RUBEN MARTINEZ	54
E2	ANNE MAURO	46
E3	MARY BETH BLUE	40
LCH	DIANE SORANTINO	84
SJCH	CODIE LINDSAY	82
JCH	ABEL SPIRE	90
VCH	GRAHAM STIRZAKER	91
SVCH	BOB DAVIS	86
SSVCH	BILL RAY	76

5-STAND EVENT		
CH	GEORGE DIGWEED	94
RU	WENDELL CHERRY	94
3RD	RANDY BARRINGTON	94
M1	MIKE WILGUS	93
M2	JAMES PLUMLEY	93
M3	DAVID RADULOVICH	92
AA1	TRES SUMMERLIN	86
AA2	EDDIE BAKER	82
AA3	DOUG WATTS	80
A1	COLIN MOSTERT	78
A2	THOMAS SCHLEIER	75
A3	TRACE DUHON	74
B1	MARCO CAZARIN	80
B2	GARZA VILLARREA	77
B3	HOMERO KUSULAS	75
C1	WALTON ELLER	74
C2	HECTOR WILLS	73
C3	JORGE DEL BARCO	73
D1	HURTADO GUTIERR	77
D2	FREDERICK FUNK	70
D3	RICK MERCADO	68
E1	RUBEN MARTINEZ	60
E2	ARTURO PENNA	36
LCH	JENNI CLARK	83
SJCH	HUNTER MILLIGAN	87
JCH	SHAWN STITT	92
VCH	RANDY BARRINGTON	94
SVCH	SAM BENNETT	83
SSVCH	RONALD SHAFER	71

20 GAUGE EVENT

CH	MICHAEL COLEMAN	95
RU	SCOTT ROBERTSON	95
3RD	KIRK CLEERE	94
M1	RANDY RYAN	93
M2	WILLIAM WALTON	92
M3	CLARK WALRAVEN	91
AA1	EDDIE BAKER	84
AA2	KIMBERLY WEIKEL	84
AA3	BRANDON BREDEMAYER	83
A1	DILLON ANDERSON	80
A2	NICK CLEMENT	79
A3	BRIAN HUNTLEY	79
B1	JULIAN GONZALEZ	88
B2	KENNETH CAMPBELL	82
B3	ALBERT GARZA	82
C1	CESAR YANEZ	81
C2	PAUL PENDLETON	79
C3	CARLOS CARBAJAL	78
D1	MARVIN DURHAM	75
D2	BENJAMIN SLAUGHTER	71
D3	ARTURO BALBOA	71
E1	MARY BETH BLUE	61
E2	JOHN JOHNSON	50
E3	RACHEL DAVIDSON	44
LCH	KIMBERLY WEIKEL	84
SJCH	KOLBY KAHLDEN	90
JCH	KELBY SEANOR	83
VCH	RANDY RYAN	93
SVCH	NEAL JOHNSON	90
SSVCH	GEORGE EDDY	72

28 GAUGE EVENT

CH	WILLIAM WALTON	92
RU	BOB SELF	92
3RD	LYN WARD	90
M1	MIKE ROGERS	89
M2	BRIAN HUGHES	88
M3	CRAIG McMICHAEL	87
AA1	RUSSELL JORDAN	88
AA2	TODD HENDERSON	83
AA3	DANNY WEBB	83
A1	GEORGE MAPUS	82
A2	RANDY LAMBERJACK	80
A3	ROBERT LAUREL	77
B1	ALBERT GARZA	82
B2	JAIME JAVELLY	77
B2	JOE VILLARREAL	77
C1	CESAR YANEZ	80
C2	GILDARDO CHAVEZ	75
C3	WAYNE BRUNETTE	71
D1	STEVE TRAUTMANN	75
D2	AROLDO DOVALINA	70
D3	ARTURO BALBOA	68
E1	MARY BETH BLUE	52
E2	JOHN JOHNSON	52
E3	RACHEL DAVIDSON	51
LCH	DONNA LEWELLEN	79
SJCH	KOLBY KAHLDEN	81
JCH	MICHAEL ALVARADO	74
VCH	BOB SELF	92
SVCH	BOB DAVIS	86
SSVCH	BILL RAY	73

conditions had become a textbook example of the 'wrong weather', with the wind gusting close to 40mph and the clothing layers piling on rapidly to combat the falling temperatures as the evening wore on.

As expected, the targets for the Super Final in such windy conditions looked beyond the reach of mere mortals. If anyone wanted to overturn Digweed's one point lead and take the title, then now was the time to 'man up'. Wilgus and Kidd responded to the challenge, both shooting the highest score on the first station – resulting in Kidd changing Digweed's one point lead to a deficit of the same number. Digweed managed to achieve a 'damage limitation exercise' on the second station to keep things static. It was now all down to the last station to decide the 2011 World title.

Digweed was last to shoot. Cory Kruse had shot 13+188=201, Byron Justice scored 14+189=203,



BRAD KIDD IN THE SUPER FINAL.

Pat Lieske was on 16+191=207, Mike Wilgus had the highest final score of 19+188=207 and Brad Kidd scored 16+191 for 207. Would the 207s be enough. Digweed couldn't afford to miss more than two of the tricky targets on his last station if he hoped to add a 19th title to his resume. His fifth target of the eight went on unbroken – the pressure was on. But if there's ever a man who can cope in these situations it's Digweed – and he ran the last three targets to finish on 209 to the applause of the crowd.



WENDELL CHERRY AND GEORGE DIGWEED.



.410 BORE EVENT

CH	SCOTT ROBERTSON	94
RU	CARL SKIP ZAPFFE	86
3RD	JON KRUGER	86
M1	BOB SELF	84
M2	KOLBY KAHLDEN	83
M3	JOSEPH KENNEDY	82
AA1	DANNY WEBB	82
AA2	BRANDON BREDEMAYER	82
AA3	MICHAEL ALVARADO	81
A1	ROBERT LAUREL	73
A2	DANNY ROWE	70
A3	LAMAR PETERMAN	68
B1	ALBERT GARZA	74
B2	DANIEL FISCHER	69
B3	ALLEN COVE	66
C1	ROBERT HAYES	73
C2	WAYNE BRUNETTE	67
C3	PAUL PENDLETON	63
D1	STEVE TRAUTMANN	61
D2	GARY HOLLOWELL	58
D3	PATRICK FARRELL	54
E1	MARY BETH BLUE	47
E2	JOHN JOHNSON	45
E3	RACHEL DAVIDSON	33
LCH	VICKIE CRAINE	65
SJCH	KOLBY KAHLDEN	83
JCH	MICHAEL ALVARADO	81
VCH	BOB SELF	84
SVCH	CARL SKIP ZAPFFE	86
SSVCH	BILL RAY	56

SMALL GAUGE HOA

CH	SCOTT ROBERTSON	276
RU	JON KRUGER	258
3RD	KIRK CLEERE	256
M1	BRIAN HUGHES	255
M2	KOLBY KAHLDEN	254
M3	CLARK WALRAVEN	252
AA1	DANNY WEBB	245
AA2	BRANDON BREDEMAYER	239
AA3	MICHAEL ALVARADO	237
A1	ROBERT LAUREL	223
A2	LAMAR PETERMAN	220
A3	GEORGE MAPUS	215
B1	ALBERT GARZA	238
B2	DANIEL FISCHER	224
B3	JOE VILLARREAL	212
C1	PAUL PENDLETON	212
C2	WAYNE BRUNETTE	206
C3	RICHARD KOTZUR	189
D1	STEVE TRAUTMANN	205
D2	PATRICK FARRELL	178
D3	GARY HOLLOWELL	177
E1	MARY BETH BLUE	161
E2	JOHN JOHNSON	147
E3	RACHEL DAVIDSON	128
LCH	KIMBERLY WEIKEL	223
SJCH	KOLBY KAHLDEN	254
JCH	MICHAEL ALVARADO	237
VCH	BOB SELF	252
SVCH	BOB DAVIS	248
SSVCH	BILL RAY	195

FITASC EVENT

CH	BRANDON POWELL	96
RU	BEN HUSTHWAITE	94
3RD	SHAWN STITT	94
M1	SAM GREEN	93
M2	DIEGO DUARTE	93
M3	BEN BRUNTON	93
AA1	MICHELLE WAMPLER	83
AA2	NATHAN BATCHELOR	82
AA3	REBECCA BREAM	80
A1	THOMAS ROLLINS	84
A2	STUART SMITH	79
A3	MIKE GRAVES	78
B1	KENNETH CAMPBELL	72
B2	ROBERT SIDLER	72
B3	LUIGI TORCHIA	68
C1	TIM BREMNER	71
C2	HECTOR WILLS	69
C3	SHAMI BIFFLE	67
D1	ROMAN SAAVEDRA	76
D2	ROBERT STEGMAIER	67
D3	FERNANDO VILLALON	63
E1	ANNE MAURO	46
E2	MARY BETH BLUE	25
LCH	DIANE SORANTINO	91
JCH	SHAWN STITT	94
VCH	JOHN WOOLLEY	90
SVCH	MICHAEL TAYLOR	86

MAIN EVENT

CH	GEORGE DIGWEED	209
RU	BRAD KIDD	207
3RD	MIKE WILGUS	207
M1	PAT LIESKE	207
M2	BYRON JUSTICE	203
M3	CORY KRUSE	201
AA1	ANDREW SEAMAN	170
AA2	ROHN ABBOTT	164
AA3	HALEY DUNN	164
A1	STUART SMITH	156
A2	WILLY CHERRY	152
A3	MIKE HERMAN	151
B1	ROBERT SIDLER	147
B2	P.D. PARKER	146
B3	RICHARD GARZA	142
C1	MARKKU POUTAINEN	151
C2	HECTOR WILLS	147
C3	SHAWN LOVELADY	145
D1	MATTHEW PERKINS	135
D2	FREDERICK FUNK	134
D3	HURTADO GUTIERR	133
E1	RUBEN MARTINEZ	140
E2	ANNE MAURO	106
E3	ARTURO PENA	96
LCH	ASHLEIGH HAFLEY	174
SJCH	ROSS NESKORA	176
JCH	SAM GREEN	186
VCH	LARRY CORBETT	175
SVCH	RON HONEFENGER	172
SSVCH	RONALD SHAFER	156

The three 207s had to be separated by a shoot-off, Kidd eventually taking RU ahead of Wilgus (3rd) and Lieske (M1).

Concurrent Winners

Larry Corbett won Veterans after a shoot-off against Dan Carlisle with John Woolley adding the Bronze to his haul of trophies from the week. Sam Green of England won the Junior title (again) with 186. In Super Veterans Ron Honefenger took the win with 172 and Ron Shafer (156) was the Senior SuperVeteran winner. San Antonio is proving to be a good venue for Ashleigh Hafley who took another Ladies World title with an impressive 174. Ross Neskora (176) collected the Sub Juniors trophy over Hunter Milligan by four targets with Zach Charbula in third place.

Team Results

In the Team standings it was Gold all round for USA – a fantastic result which saw Team Manager, Jeff Demmons, well rewarded for his efforts. “Everyone was very serious about representing the US and the teams really supported and cheered each other on. It was great to watch and achieve the results we’d hoped for.”

A delighted George Digweed was pleased to have edged one nearer to his 20th World title. “It’s been a great shoot and I’ve really enjoyed it. The final was particularly exciting. With the scores being so close going to the

last stand, it just goes to show how the standards in this sport are constantly improving – a positive reflection on the sport and its future.” Brad Kidd was also effusive about his performance. “It was an incredible experience going into the last cage of the Super Final in the lead, one of those few moments we get in life to do something incredible. I didn’t pull it off this time, but hats off to George for making the most of those moments so many times.” ■



ABOVE: FUNDRAISING FOR TEAM USA. BELOW: BEN HUSTHWAITE OF ENGLAND WON THE WEEKEND TOP GUN SHOOT-OFF. SCOTT ROBERTSON WAS SECOND AND BRAD KIDD THIRD.

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