

The more the better

DESPITE SOME DISAPPOINTING TURN-OUTS AT BIG BLASTS LATE IN THE SEASON, THE SPORT – PARTICULARLY SPORTING CLAYS – CONTINUES TO GROW IN APPEAL TO YOUNG AND OLD, MALE AND FEMALE. SHOOTING COSTS ARE ESCALATING, BUT CORPORATE, CHARITY AND SMALL CLUB MEMBERSHIP IS BOOMING

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As copies of this issue roll off the printing presses, the Nationals are underway at NSCA Headquarters in San Antonio. Despite the change of date, entries held up well – but that can not be said of several more recent Big Blasts.

Elsewhere in this issue we report on the Kruger Classic, the National FITASC Championship and the 2007 US Grand Prix – entries for each were less than expected. It's been a long season. Just how much time and disposable income do competitive shooters have – not enough, it

would appear, to support so many major events.

Or is it just a case of rising costs of competitive shooting? Gas, hotel, air travel and ammunition prices have risen sharply over the last six months – undoubtedly leading to declining entries for some Big Blasts. Even so, we are confident that the end of year NSCA statistics will show continued growth in membership and the number of registered targets thrown.

However, it's the non registered targets thrown that are of more significance. The number of corporate and charity events across the country, supported by local industry sponsors and the trade, are booming – while raising huge amounts for charity. Small club memberships are also on the increase. If our sport could convert these shooters to NSCA membership and better publicize the charitable side of the sport in the community, then clay target shooting (all disciplines) would be the better off.

LEAD OR STEEL?

That's the question. The rising cost of lead has seen ammunition prices soar. In addition to acting as a brake on 'more shooting', it brings into sharp focus the economic benefits of reloading – particularly .410 and 28gm. For the first time, lead and (some) steel shells are similarly priced. But price isn't everything – performance is! In this issue our ballistics expert, Tim Woodhouse, studies the performance of lead and steel. He concludes that lead #8.5 with a 3 foot velocity of 1200fps makes a



fair comparison with steel #7 fired at 1330fps@3 feet. Performance is similar, in terms of striking energy, at 40 yards, but after that, lead #8.5 gains the upperhand. He also concludes that for longer targets, such as FITASC, steel shot requires more forward lead and increased elevation to allow for greater drop of the shot cloud. If you want to match the performance of 1oz #7 lead shot, 1¹/₂oz #5 steel pellets are needed. Imagine the recoil – that's provided your gun is proofed to use such shells.

Our regular mail-bag tells us that our instructional articles are always well received. This issue, Nick Sisley was set the task of clarifying the mysteries of shooting the battue. He enlisted the help of Chris Batha, Pat Lieske and Dan Carlisle – clearly there are more ways than you think of ensuring

that these are 'banker' targets.

In addition to our regular Shoot Reports, Retail Therapy, Gun Test and news pages, we introduce two new features this issue. Our readers' Questions and Answers feature has been extended to cover shooting instruction, ballistics and gunsmithing. Keep your questions coming. Also new for this issue (and our next issue) is our Top Shots feature – an end of year review of what guns and what ammunition these winners use and why.

Finally, in this our last issue of 2007, I'd like to pass on to you all the very best of seasonal good wishes from the whole management and production team here at ClayShootingUSA. We all appreciate your loyal support to the magazine and are fully committed to maintaining standards and honest reporting for 2008 and beyond. ■