

In Conversation

DEREK MOORE TALKS WITH DAN CARLISLE



PHOTOGRAPH BY NATHAN TOWRY

As a result of his win at this year's NSCA National Championship, Dan Carlisle is the only competitor in the country to have won USSCA, SCA and NSCA National Sporting Clay titles. He is a two time Olympian and medal winner, World Champion and now 14 time National Champion across various disciplines. He is, without doubt, one of the most successful shotgun shooting coaches in the United States, coaching the majority of our top sporting clays shooters at one time or another. No shooter has dominated in more disciplines than he.

DM So how does it feel to be NSCA National Champion?

DC Good, great, awesome!

DM Did you have a plan going in?

DC Most definitely. I trained for about three months, working on a new mental program. When I got out there that last day, I was really calm and had a good time on Sunday to be able to finish it. It was tough on Saturday – I was a little tense as that's kind of the "make day". Get through the third day and you've got a chance – that seems to be the way the big shoots go – but I got through it with a 71 on the Orange course which I thought was the next to easiest of the four courses. That's how they do it, they kind of throw courses in order, in sense of difficulty. The Green one was the hardest, then Yellow, then Orange with Red being the easiest. I was lucky I shot the easier courses first so I had a good chance to take it home.

DM When we talked right before you went out on Sunday, I had a feeling you were going to do it – you were really focused.

DC I felt real calm. That final day I shot the Green course. I ran the

first stand, missed one on the second, ran the third, ran the fourth and missed 3 on the fifth stand. The next stand was kind of easy – a fluffy teal at about 25 yards and a little incomer at about 25 yards – I ran that so I kind of got back on track. My squad helped me too, they kept everybody off me and wouldn't let anyone talk about scores. They took good care of me.

DM Stevie (Liberta) said he was going to play blocker.

DC Yes, between him, Ed (Arrighi) and Frank (Skipper), they just kind of surrounded me and that made a big difference. Steve led off all week. Usually I lead off and he follows me. The Green course was mean and nasty, it had teeth all over it!

DM I shot Green the first day. I wish I'd been able to shoot it later rather than starting on it.

DC We were pretty lucky not to shoot Green first – it was the toughest course. It had a lot of big long trap shots or big long trappy teal shots which, thankfully I shoot pretty good. I have shot a lot of trap birds as you know. Anything long, deep or quartering I shoot pretty good.

There were also a couple of good crossers on Green and some real good overheads. I thought this course could get you in trouble – there were at least 4 or 5 stands that were damn tough. But you have to get through them even though they are going to take one or two targets from you. Even so, I just felt calm, I just felt like I was going to do it. When I hit the next to last pair of the competition, in my mind I felt like I had won it right there. That's what it felt like! On the last pair I thought 'you're all mine'. I hit those real hard. It's just one of those things where it all worked out – I've have been looking for that trophy for a long time.

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DM It's the first time you have really gone after it.

DC My wife, Lisa, had a lot to do with it. She made me go out there and train – practicing the mental stuff I was working on. I often came home pouting because I lose and she gets on my ass saying "well you don't train, so how do you expect to win anything." It kind of got me off the couch which really helped a lot.

DM You've been traveling around doing your teaching which keeps your mental game sharp. I think training for it has really made the difference, you were really focused.

DC It's all about confidence. I shot two small shoots at my local club here in Capital City in Austin where I work. Ed Arrighi and I trained at three different places, shooting about 3000 birds – it took about 2000 birds to get it down solid. That really got me focused and established my routine. A couple of times during the Championship I had some negative thoughts, but I was able to step

back, clear my head, go through my mental routine, tell myself it was just like practice and calm myself down. I only missed one really 'easy' bird on the last day.

DM What order did you shoot the courses in?

DC On day one I shot Yellow, which was the second hardest – I shot 70. Then I shot Red which I thought was the easiest. I think the scores prove that, there was a 74. I broke 73. I shot Orange on Saturday and Green on Sunday. It was rewarding to take the lead on day one and hold it throughout the shoot. It's the best kind of win and it really makes me feel good to still be able to do it at 51. You can never really count me out. I'd like to get a couple more!

DM In a couple of years the Veterans had better watch out.

DC (Laughs). Yea, I'm looking forward to that.

DM Tell me about your training program.

DC I call it the Don Haldeman training program. We only have three Gold medals in the history of Olympic trap shooting, the last person to win one was Don Haldeman in Montreal in '76. We all lived together in the same house in the army – he was a gunsmith. He was really on the shotgun team but he would rather work on guns. We would be down there training 500 targets a day and he would come down about a month before the shoot and train on 50 birds, gradually building up and dialing himself in and then spank our ass – it was unbelievable. I thought about this a lot. I went through it, and got my training together. I thought about this Championship for three months. I visualized winning it, getting that Gold Medal around my neck – I'm still a little bit on cloud 9! ■