

Make no mistake, it was a herculean task. Set at least 180 different target presentations. Not simple, bang-bang fluff, either, but legitimate Big Blast stuff. Oh, and make 40 of those presentations World Cup quality FITASC targets; plus another 20 FITASC presentations just a half-step below those. And do it all in three weeks or less. By yourself with just one fulltime helper.

Think you could handle it? If you've never set a target, then you

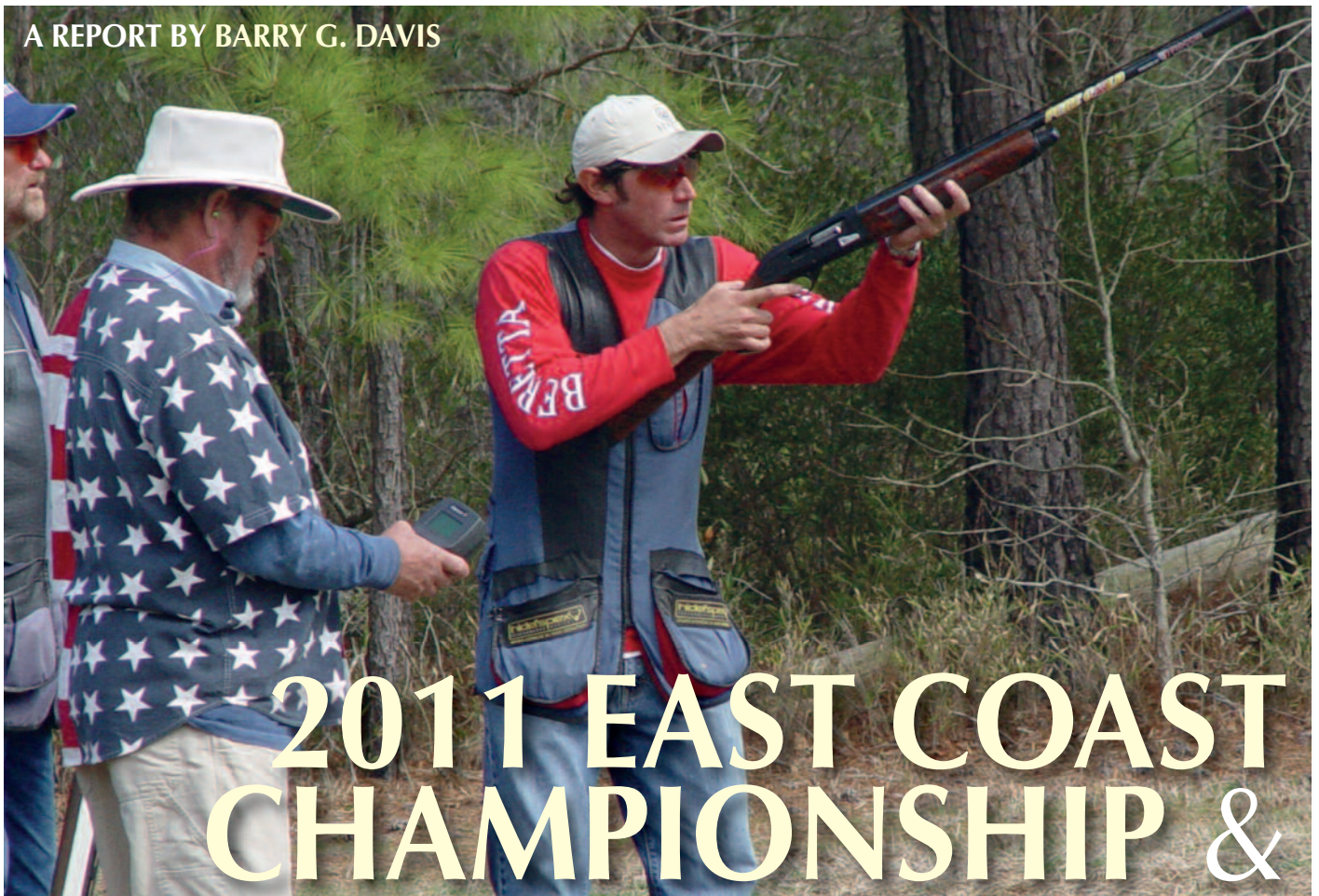
probably have little idea of what's involved. If you have set targets, even just a few simple ones for a club or fun shoot, then you know it's not as easy as it sounds. I expected that something would inevitably suffer when the Frazier's, Lori and Chuck, at Hunters' Pointe in Washington, North Carolina, decided to simultaneously run both the North American FITASC Grand Prix, one of the World Cup events on the international calendar, and their own highly regarded East Coast

Championship this past March.

Not only was the setting of targets an enormous undertaking, but the fundamental logistics of running two major shoots at the same time on a relatively small ground was daunting. The key was the timing of events and rotations in order to make them accessible to everyone who wanted to shoot them. And if not everyone, then to as many people as possible. To do it, the Grand Prix was scheduled like most major international FITASC championships – four

ANTHONY MATARESE JR. ON GRAND PRIX LAYOUT #8 WITH REFEREE DAVE MCCOOK. ANTHONY WON THE EAST COAST CHAMPIONSHIP OUTRIGHT, FINISHED THIRD IN THE GRAND PRIX AND WON THE EAST COAST PRE-LIM.

A REPORT BY BARRY G. DAVIS



2011 EAST COAST CHAMPIONSHIP & NORTH AMERICAN FITASC GRAND PRIX

days, 50 targets over two layouts each day, for a total of 200 targets. The East Coast Championship, with its own full program of events, was also modified, going from four days to five. If you think it sounds complicated just reading a synopsis of it here, think about actually organizing it!

Did the changes satisfy everyone? Nope. Some folks, who might've shot the Grand Prix if it had been over three days, didn't because of the extra day away from work and the added expense. Then again, there were also people shooting the Grand Prix who would've never traveled as far just to shoot the East Coast. As they say, some you win, some you lose, and some are rained out. Overall, the numbers proved it was a wise decision and that I was wrong in expecting something to suffer. Nothing did. In fact, except for a couple of minor

delays early on, the whole shoot week ran like clockwork. With the 200-target Grand Prix, the 200-target East Coast Championship, a 100-target FITASC Pre-lim, a 100-target Sporting Pre-lim, 50-target small gauges, a 50-target 5-Stand, plus warm-ups and games, it was one heck of an accomplishment for such a small staff.

Wednesday – and So It Begins

The party began on Wednesday 16th March with a 100-target FITASC shot over four layouts. Though it was officially part of the East Coast Championship program, it primarily attracted the early Grand Prix arrivers, including a small contingent of shooters from the Great White North. Ironically, this 'added' day provided the only poor weather of



the shoot week. Every other day was mostly sunny with high temperatures from the mid-60s to near 80 degrees. Not bad for mid-March. However, for Wednesday, there was rain overnight and there wasn't much of a dawn – just a meager lightening of the sky as the sun tried to fight its way through a thick blanket of dark and dreary clouds. It was purely bad luck for the first rotation of squads out at 8:00am because some of the edgier

targets against a wooded background were almost invisible – at least to older eyes.

The four layouts were overlaid on the 'corners' of the grounds' regular sporting course, so there weren't any real 'big air' targets. Most everything was in the 20-35 yard range, with a few that stretched it a bit further. However, Frazier gave the FITASC shooters a taste of what to expect on the Grand Prix layouts by

incorporating a litany of tricky transitions and speed changes. The most technically demanding of the layouts was #4, set around the grounds' permanent tower. A right to left chandelle, a crow, a low quarterer and two edgy targets off of the top of the tower, one at mach speed, were tough on many scorecards. They weren't far, but they needed a lot of lead and a very positive move.

By the time the day's three rotations were finished, Wendell Cherry and Florida's Brian DuQuesnay found themselves tied at the top on equal 92s. Following a subsequent shoot-off, Cherry came out on top with DuQuesnay relegated to Runner-up. One further back at M1 was an old friend of mine from Missouri, Tom Ruck. TR and I first met riding the ski lifts at the World FITASC Championship at Okemo Mountain twenty years ago. He

knew how to shoot then (he was Captain of the U.S. Team) – and he still knows how!

Thursday – Big Targets and Little Guns

The next morning brought the small gauge 50s on the Main course, and, on the far side of the ground, the first 50 targets of the Grand Prix.

The small gauges were shot over eight stands with three traps and three shooting pegs per stand. Each of the different little guns shot from a separate peg at two of the three target presentations. That way, unlike a lot of small gauge set-ups where you shoot the same targets from the same stand with each of the gauges, no one could get totally locked in to the presentations.

The popularity of the little guns

continues to amaze me. There were 138 entries in the small gauge races – obviously with some folks shooting more than one of the gauges. In the .410, Brad Ramsey took HOA with 42ex50. (Ramsey also won the side-by-side with a 45ex50, while David Collins Jr. took the Pump with 47.) The 28 gauge ended up with Wendell Cherry and Richard McCready coming equal on 46, with Cherry getting the tie-breaker to take the gauge. In the 20, Lewis McMurrans 48 planted him firmly on top of the field of 58.

On the Grand Prix layouts, it was a whole different story. Frazier takes FITASC seriously, and with it also being a selection shoot for Team USA, he bumped things up another notch.

The eight layouts were set adjacent to a long cart path with three that could be classified as 'woody' and the others as 'wide

open'. Scissor lifts and scaffolding were used to great advantage to give elevation to what was basically flat ground. And he didn't hesitate hiding a trap or two here and there to force you to alter your hold point in order to allow your eyes to catch up to a target as it emerged from behind a tree or dirt mound. And unlike the four layouts of the FITASC Pre-lim, there were numerous 'big air' target presentations for the Grand Prix.

It didn't take long, like maybe after the first rotation in the morning, for word to get back that this was serious stuff. First day scores seemed to indicate that layouts #2, #4, #7, and #8 were the more friendly, while layout #1 was unanimously regarded as the Devil's playground! I shot #1 and #2 on Thursday and was unceremoniously ground into the dirt. I should've expected it, because health issues prevented

me from getting in any practice for the previous five months. That's no excuse, however, because, as a knowledgeable friend said, these were big boy targets and you needed to bring your 'A' game just to stay alive. And I didn't have an 'A' game!

By the end of the day, Curt Mauldin, who shot #7 and #8, was atop the leader board with a 47, followed by Wendell Cherry (#5 & #6) and Todd Simmons (#7 & #8) on 46, Paul Oppgard (#3 & #4), Gebben Miles (#5 & #6) and Diane Sorantino (#7 & #8), the top Lady, all on 45, with Anthony Matarese Jr (#1 & #2) one further back on 44 along with Brian DuQuesnay (#5 & #6) and Richie Nazarro (#7 & #8). Matarese was the only one of the top guys to shoot #1 and his 20 was an eye-opener. The remainder of the letter classes were also tight, with little more than a target or two separating the top few places.

Friday – The Sporting Pre-lim and the G.P.'s Second 50

Over on the East Coast Championship side of the ground, Friday saw the 100-target

RIGHT: WENDELL CHERRY IN THE NORTH AMERICAN FITASC GRAND PRIX SHOOT-OFF. HE FINISHED WITH THE SILVER MEDAL IN THE GRAND PRIX, FINISHED M4 IN THE EAST COAST CHAMPIONSHIP AND WON THE EAST COAST CHAMPIONSHIP 100-TARGET FITASC.



BELOW: CURT MAULDIN ON ONE OF THE GRAND PRIX FITASC LAYOUTS. HE FINISHED M1 IN THE GRAND PRIX AND WAS THE 5-STAND CHAMPION.



SHOOTER ATTEMPTS A TRUE PAIR OF TEAL ON STAND #13 OF THE EAST COAST CHAMPIONSHIP MAIN EVENT.



Sporting Pre-lim. Shot over 14 stands it was the biggest Pre-lim the East Coast has ever had in its long existence with 222 competitors virtually filling the three rotations.

Considering the quality of the shooters in attendance, Frazier had set the Pre-lim with the winning score targeted to be a 95 or 96. The only question mark would be how well the top guys maintained their concentration and how they handled the platform on stand #1, which was the key separator stand. It consisted of a low grass cutter quartering up a gully that

took a lot more lead than appeared necessary, followed by a right to left crosser that took less than expected. When the last shots had been fired, he was right on the money.

Anthony Matarese Jr. and David Radulovich tied on 96 with Bill McGuire one back on 94 and current National Champion, Brad Kidd, and R. Wayne Davis one further arrears. Matarese won the shoot-off to take High Gun with Radulovich in RU and McGuire, Kidd and Davis finishing M1 through M3 respectively. Deborah Davis claimed the Ladies, Ross Neskora the Sub-Juniors, Radulovich the Juniors, Larry Corbett the Veterans, George Bogner the Super-Veterans and Ron Shafer the Senior Super-Veterans.

On the Grand Prix side, Wendell Cherry and Curt Mauldin swapped positions at the top. Cherry, who had straighted #5 on Thursday, put in his second straight, this time on #7, to come in on 91 for the two days. Mauldin shot #1 and #2 and survived it with a 43 to end up on 90. Paul Opegard, Anthony Matarese Jr. and Todd Simmons were all steady, finishing up on equal 89s. Gebben Miles straighted #7, but then had a tire go flat on #8 with an 18 to end up one further back. Still within striking distance were a double handful of others, including guys like Will Fennell and Joe Carey. The other classes, both letter and concurrent, saw positions shift a bit, except for Ladies where Diane Sorantino had an eleven target lead over Paula Moore.

day. You'd be wrong. With five or six traps pre-set on each of those fields for the shoot (out of the more than 140 traps in use during the week), shooting the "same old, same old" was not an issue. Frazier couldn't live with himself if all he did was kick a trap around a few degrees or change the elevation or speed and call it a new target presentation like some other grounds do.

However, the two Main Event courses did have a couple of similarities. Each was fifteen stands, and, even with a field of 266 shooters, each moved along so smoothly that it never seemed busier than a monthly club shoot. It's hard to describe the targets because there was some of everything. And that 'everything' included speed changes and transitions galore. With only a

handful of targets beyond 40 yards, if that, you were simply allowed to beat yourself by misreading line or how to get smoothly from the first target of a pair to the second. And a lot of folks did just that.

When I asked a small group of top shooters about which stands were the most difficult and/or technical, they all looked at each other and couldn't come up with anything. Rather, they agreed that virtually all of the stands were of equal difficulty, give or take a bit, based on one's own personal strengths or weaknesses. What they also said was that Frazier had matched a technically challenging target to one that was more straightforward on each of the stands. That way, no matter what your class, if you kept your head in it, you would shoot 50 percent and

then be able to build your final score on top of that from the 'difficult' half of the equation.

At the end of Saturday's first 100, Anthony Matarese Jr.'s 96 was one clear of David Radulovich and Todd Simmons, two up on R. Wayne Davis, and three ahead of Wendell Cherry, Bill McGuire, Gebben Miles, Lingard Sperl and Matt Vianello. The letter classes were equally as close, except for AA where Andrew Wysocky was five up on his closest competitor.

Over on the Grand Prix layouts, the same kind of target tricks, with some even more devious, were played out but with a lot more real estate between the gun and the targets. With that said, the biggest stunner of the week took place under Saturday's bright blue skies. Former National

Champion, Gebben Miles, straighted layout #1! When word got back to the clubhouse area, no one could believe it. Virtually everyone would've been more than happy to escape its evil clutches with a 20. A straight? No way! Dave McCook, the red, white and blue-shirted referee on #1 later told me that Miles was as smooth as grease on glass and that he pretty much centered

every target. And when he followed it up with a 23 on #2, he vaulted himself to the top of the board on 136 along with Curt Mauldin who straighted #4 and added a 21 on #3. Matarese moved up a spot to be only one back while Cherry dropped from leading the field to four back because of a 17 on #1 where he was joined by Simmons. Lurking ever closer, however, was young Radulovich, setting the stage for an interesting finish on Sunday.



Saturday – The East Coast Mai and the G.P.'s Third 50

With only fifteen permanent shooting fields on the circular Sporting course (there may have been sixteen, I lost count), you would think there would be some duplication of targets from day to

**FAR LEFT:
GRAND PRIX
LADY RUNNER-UP
PAULA MOORE
ON FITASC.
LEFT: ALL-
AMERICAN
CURTIS
ANDERSON IN
THE EAST COAST
CHAMPIONSHIP
MAIN EVENT.
ABOVE: SQUAD
ON ANOTHER OF
THE PLATFORM
STANDS IN THE
EAST COAST
CHAMPIONSHIP
MAIN EVENT.**

TODD SIMMONS ON STAND #1, ONE OF THE PLATFORM STANDS OF THE EAST COAST CHAMPIONSHIP MAIN EVENT WITH RICHIE NAZARRO WATCHING. SIMMONS FINISHED M2 IN THE EAST COAST CHAMPIONSHIP AND M2 IN THE GRAND PRIX.



Sunday – Crunch Time

In the East Coast Main Event, where the nearly \$20,000 in guaranteed purse money was paid down eight places in class, Sunday's second 100 was a touch stiffer than the previous day. Gebben Miles was the only one of the top guys who picked up a couple of targets over Saturday, finishing with a 95 to go along with a first day 93 for a total of 188. Radulovich dropped off by three and Simmons by four, while McGuire and Cherry stayed steady with 93's each day. It all came down to what Matarese would do. In the end, his 93, along with his first day's 96 for a total of 189ex200, proved to be one target to the good of Miles, bringing him the East Coast title and the biggest slice of the purse. Miles finished Runner-up with Radulovich,



DAVID RADULOVICH IN THE NORTH AMERICAN FITASC GRAND PRIX SHOOT-OFF WITH WENDELL CHERRY AND ANTHONY MATARESE (HIDDEN) ALONG WITH CURT MAULDIN AND TODD SIMMONS (OUT OF THE FRAME).

Simmons, McGuire and Cherry filling out the top four spots of Master class respectively.

In the letter classes, Andrew Wysocky blew away AA by eleven targets while Buddy Waddell took A class, Clint Fleming B class, Paolo Periti C class, Stephen Oskiera Jr. D class, all by much closer margins, with only Braxton Oliver in E also running away with his class. In the concurrents, Diane Sorantino finished 17 clear of Ashleigh Hafley

in Ladies, with Ross Neskora taking Sub-Juniors, David Radulovich the Juniors, Larry Corbett the Veterans, Larry Farrow the Super-Veterans and Ron Shafer the Senior Super-Veterans.

Miles finished Runner-up, with Radulovich, Simmons, McGuire and Cherry filling out the top four spots of Master class respectively.

of 20s on #5 and #6 to end on a 176 which was equal to Simmons who put in a 21 and 23 on the same layouts. Matarese, on #7 and #8, put in a 23 and 20 while Cherry, shooting #3 and #4, added a pair of 23s to his previous total of 132 to tie him with Matarese on 178. Finally, David Radulovich, shooting on a different schedule altogether, methodically hammered target after target to ease his way into a tie with Cherry and Matarese. The end result was a shoot-off; not only for the podium places and the Gold, Silver and Bronze World Cup medals, but also for Master class first and second between Mauldin and Simmons.

As is the proper way to do it, the shoot-off was over an entirely new layout. Set at the club's Sporting tower field, the targets were a pair of chandelles, one left to right, the other right to left; a pair of very fast, low standards, left to right and right to left again, and a flat, edge on, going away screamer off of the tower. Everything was at least 30 yards – if you didn't hesitate! Obviously, the angles changed from peg to peg, but you get the picture of what they had to deal with. On top of the target difficulty, it was sunset and the light was fading fast, so visibility wasn't the best.

Back on the Grand Prix side, the finish was not only tighter, but even more unexpected. Gebben Miles, who vaulted to the top on Saturday with a brilliant performance, had a major inexplicable hiccup on Sunday, shooting a 16 on #3! Though he bounced back with a 23 on #4, it wasn't enough to keep him in contention. Curt Mauldin, who had been tied with Miles at the top, had his own problems, shooting a pair

The tension was thick enough to cut with a dull knife and the display of shooting truly challenging targets under extreme pressure was exceptional. In the end, for M1, Mauldin topped Simmons by five targets. For the podium places, Matarese and Cherry each missed five. Radulovich only dropped three, giving him not only the overall North American FITASC Grand Prix crown, but also the Junior title as well. Silver and Bronze still had to be settled, but with almost no



DAVID RADULOVICH WITH HIS GRAND PRIX MEDALS AND TROPHY BOWLS. (PHOTO COURTESY OF BRIAN RADULOVICH).

light left, the second shoot-off was abbreviated and Cherry squeaked by Materese to take the second level on the podium.

In the concurrents, Diane Sorantino topped Paula Moore in Ladies, Radulovich was seven clear of Shawn Stitt in Juniors, Paul Opegard finished four up on Brian DuQuesnay in Veterans and Michael Taylor pipped Gonzalo Vargas by two in Super-Veterans. The letter classes went to Mauldin in Masters, Andrew Wysocky in



If you judge shoots based on target quality and value for the money, then this pairing was, by any measure, an indisputable success.

AA, Bill Toler in A, John Isgrigg III in B, Paolo Periti in C, Mathew Turner in D and Ed Ketchie in E.

Highlights and Sidelights

The shooting highlights of the weekend had to be Anthony Matarese's rock solid consistency in the East Coast Championship; Gebben Miles' straight on Grand Prix layout #1; and David Radulovich's shoot-off win against two of the best in American Sporting for the Grand Prix title. The eighteen year old from Ohio is an exceptional talent, but, even more importantly, he's the kind of young man that should be a role model for those youngsters new to the game. Oh, and watch out

for his little sister, Brianne, who finished the Grand Prix fourth in Ladies and second in A class. It won't be long before she'll be knocking on the door!

A highlight I'd be remiss in not mentioning was the shoot-off for a set of ESP electronic ear protection. Following the end of the Sporting Championship, a number was randomly selected, and those shooters whose final score ended in that number, no matter what class, were eligible for the shoot-off. They all shot the same targets, but they were handicapped by distance based on class. When the dust cleared, North Carolina's Stan Radford took home the certificate for a new set of 'ears' thanks to Jack Homa of ESP.

If you judge shoots based on target quality and value for the money, then this pairing of the East Coast Championship and the North American FITASC Grand Prix was, by any measure, an indisputable success.

For complete results, along with information about upcoming shoots like the East Coast FITASC Championship in September, go to the club's website: www.hunterspointesportingclays.com or call 252-975-2529. ■