

THE RHINO RALLY

STEVE FISCHER REPORTS ON A NEW CHAMPIONSHIP IN FLORIDA



JON KRUGER INKBALLING
A HIGH AND HANGING
TARGET.

Normally, over President's Day weekend, I would be writing about the Caribbean Cup, to which the many weather weary snow birds from places with cold measured in the 'teens and snow in inches or feet, would happily flock for warm breezes and hot targets. Though the premature demise of Sporting Clays International has taken that shoot out of the loop, it opened the way for Joe Morales of Rhino Chokes and Gun Cases to take over that time slot and present the very first Rhino Rally at his facility just outside of Williston, Florida.

Long famous for his ported screw chokes and "Tough as a Rhino" gun cases, Morales moved his machine shop operations out of the Fort Lauderdale area of South Florida and built a new and much

larger factory for the manufacture of his popular products. Shortly after that, he decided to venture once again into the sporting clays arena with the opening of Rhino Outdoors – building two excellent sporting courses over the rich rolling hills of central Florida. Beautiful large oaks are liberally sprinkled on the gentle rolling hills that make up the distinctive terrain of this facility – something that is in short supply in pancake flat Florida!

With little more than 90 days of lead time after the loss of the Caribbean Cup, Morales and his staff entered into a mad scramble to get everything ready to host the Rhino Rally. I'm sure that there were some shooters who doubted that it could be done and decided to skip the shoot, opting to wait

and see the reaction of those who did attend. Well, I have to tell you that those who took a pass on this shoot missed some of the best tournament targets seen in Florida for some time. David Judah, resident manager of the prestigious shooting facility at the Homestead Resort and Hotel in

Virginia assisted in setting one Pre-lim and two Main Event 14 station courses that tested the ability of every shooter. Station after station one target would be pretty straight forward while the other would challenge you to decipher its secrets hidden in subtle angles or in several instances, just plain speed and distance. The entertainment value was high.

FRIDAY PRE-LIM

The Pre-lim targets were set just a shade softer than the Main Event that followed, yet scores over 90 were limited to only three shooters. Herbie Kanzki posted a fine 90 to win Master class, Curtis Anderson (92) was Runner-up and Veteran Champion, while Jon Kruger (95) took HOA even though suffering from a dose of the flu! Lady Champion, Cindy Graham, posted a fine 88 with Hub Johnson (89) taking Junior Champion. Sub-Junior was won by Myles Miller (80). Skip Freeze and Dudley Gray tied for first Super-Veteran with scores of 83.



RHINO'S SCENIC ENTRANCE.



SPECTACULAR TARGETS UNDER THE SHADE OF ONE OF THE MANY LIVE OAKS.



A TOWER OVERLOOKS SOME EXCELLENT TERRAIN.



RHINO'S WELL STOCKED CLUB HOUSE AND SHOW ROOM.

MAIN EVENT

The tournament was over two 14 station courses – the North and South – with rotations at 9:00am and 1:00pm. As an afternoon starter, I heard the first reports on the North Course from the morning group – it was just about unanimous that the targets were tough but fair.

Those who were to start on the South course were unfortunately delayed until after 3 pm because vandals had come in over night and cut electrical leads in various places and tipped over several machines. Because of the late start some of the shooters were faced with setting sun and shadow problems that would not have been present

had they been able to start at the correct time. The vandals were not found and thankfully didn't return on Saturday night to continue their disruptive damage any further!

By the end of the first day the competitors were impressed with what they had seen. "Wait 'til you see the teal on Station 4 South course!" exclaimed one enthusiastic competitor, only to be covered with an equally enthusiastic North course shooter with an "oh yeah, well we had a tower shot that needs about 10 feet of lead!" And so it went on.

In between the rotations, a warm up 5-Stand was open all day and the ever popular Make-a-Break ran non-stop. The record keeping, scores and results were handled by Lois Lessing, with everything posted within minutes of completion.

Not unexpectedly, Kruger and Anderson set the pace early on by shooting the only scores of 90 on the North course. Brian DuQuesnay was in the hunt, posting an 89, as were Robert Shovan, Dave Kelley and Bob Oliver in at 87. The South course was proving to be slightly harder than the North with Randy Ryan (88) leading the way with Richard Patty and Alex Sumner one target adrift.

With the Saturday scores on the board, it was time for the banquet to begin. Appleton Rum, a favorite sponsor of many competitors, provided a free open bar featuring their fine spirits and mix to get the evening festivities rolling. Rib steaks were on the menu with all the trimmings. Directly after dinner, door prizes were given out by drawing. Beretta generously donated six of their fine auto loaders and six lucky winners went home with a new 391!

DAY TWO

Spring-like weather made it another day in paradise. For the

most part, things ran smoothly, with the exception of a broken arm on one machine, which caused a disruption in the flow for a short while. Competitors took it in their stride and at the day's end we found Jon Kruger in the HOA spot with a 177 (90-87). Alex Sumner took Runner-up (173) in a hard fought battle with Richard Patty (172) and Brian DuQuesnay (171) for first and second Master. Randy Ryan (169) was third.

In the Concurrents Diane Nelson (155) continued her hot streak topping the Ladies. There was only one Junior in this race, but Hub Johnson did it proud with 167. The Veterans found Floyd Hartlage (167) taking the honors while Bob Oliver (160) won the Super-Veterans.



JUNIOR CHAMPION HUB JOHNSON RECEIVING HIS TROPHY FROM JOE MORALES.



TOURNAMENT CHAMPION JON KRUGER ACCEPTS HIS TROPHY AND NEW 391 BERETTA SHOTGUN!

This was the first Rhino Rally – and Joe Morales and his staff did a fine job for a 'first time out of the box' tournament. Watch for this one to roll around again next year. I'll bet it will be even bigger and better! ■