

THE ANGLE PORT OPEN

CHRIS KING REPORTS FROM ELM FORK'S FIRST MAJOR

FOR MANY TOURNAMENT SHOOTERS, THERE IS ALWAYS THAT FEELING OF ANTICIPATION BEFORE A BIG SHOOT – ESPECIALLY AT A COURSE YOU HAVEN'T BEEN TO BEFORE. SUCH WAS THE CASE FOR ME AT THE ANGLE PORT OPEN, HELD ON THE NEW ELM FORK SHOOTING PARK JUST OUTSIDE OF DALLAS, TEXAS.



The short drive from the airport showed that Dallas was still sparsely dressed in her winter garb, with barren trees and colors in various shades of black and gray – brown dominating. Nevertheless, the temperatures were in the mid seventies and the early indicators of the coming spring were just beginning to show.

As we pulled into the parking area the sound of shooting and the Make-A-Break game, located right in front of the clubhouse, drew us in like a moth to a flame. Check in was quick and painless, and we were welcomed with smiles and enthusiasm by the club staff, and

in just a few minutes were on our way to the Make-A-Break game for some practice and relaxation after the long flight.

Elm Fork is a family operated club located on land belonging to the City of Dallas. Primarily a low land flood plain area, it has been a shooting facility for about forty years. Scott Robertson, along with his parents, Jeannie and Burt Almond, began operations back in October and besides operating the existing six Skeet and two Trap fields, managed to put in two Sporting courses, two 5-Stands and a Make-a-Break field!

Admittedly not fully complete

as yet, the evidence of many hours of hard work and investment were visible wherever you looked. New gravel roads, fencing barriers and shiny new traps were everywhere. The other essential ingredient for success – enthusiasm – was fairly bubbling out of Jeannie as she described the clubs goals and future plans.

GENEROUS SPONSOR

Ballistic Specialties, a familiar name to Sporting enthusiasts, has been the proud sponsor of the Angle Port Open for several years now. Their distinctive barrel

porting, as well as their hi-tech modifications to the Beretta auto loaders and other firearms and a complete line of custom chokes are a respected name in the industry. The Angle Port trailer was on site in vendor's row, displaying a vast number of items of interest to the shooter, including a large selection of shooting vests, cleaning gear, and of course, a good supply of screw in chokes.

As the main shoot sponsor, they certainly gave the competitor a wide selection of events to choose from! Beginning on Thursday there was a 50-bird sub-gauge event and a 50-bird 5-Stand. On Friday there was a 100-bird Preliminary event, followed by an additional 100-bird 5-Stand event over Saturday and Sunday, along with the 200-bird Main Event. Enough shooting for even the most enthusiastic competitor!

Tom Mack, showing a continuing strong performance as of late, was top gun in the 50 target 5-Stand with a score of 43. The sub-gauge events found Tommy Browning winner of the 20-gauge event with a strong 48, Mark Hodson also putting up a 48 to take the 28-gauge event and Gary Fitzjarrell winning the diminutive .410 event with 46. Wendell Cherry, Brent Barrett and Andy Duffy followed one, two, three in the Pre-lim, posting scores down the line at 94, 93, and 92.

The 100 target 5-Stand presentations were quite interesting and shot over four separate layouts. Andy Duffy put up a first place 94, with Mike O'Brien and Cory Kruse tied at 93 for second and third. Steve Fischer (92) topped the Veterans and Dr. Paula Benbow's 76 placed her first in the Ladies Concurrent. Mike O'Brien double dipped with his 93 for Junior Champion as well as runner-up over all, and Sub-Junior Champion Stephen Murray amazed us all with a sparkling score of 93!

200 TARGETS

The Main Event began Saturday, with two rotations over two courses. Jon Kruger came on board for this competition, lending a hand to Scott, and setting targets on one of the two courses. Those who started on Jon's course on Saturday would shoot Scott's course on Sunday, and vice-versa. Both courses were quite equal in difficulty, though the flavor of the presentations were very different. Jon's course was pretty straightforward, with two or three stations of challenging shots for separators such as a nasty pair of report rabbits at 35 to 40 yards. The window of opportunity was ample, but the orange-sided targets were tricky to pick up against the background if you

weren't looking in the right place. The distances on Jon's targets were, for the most part, very reasonable, and some in the wooded area, actually quite close. Some shots reminded me of quail flushing in the woods, darting through the trees to safety. The shooter was allowed ample time to make the shot and all the targets were easy to see, attesting to the experience and ability of Kruger to set targets for all levels of shooters.

Robertson's course was different in that it featured targets with a little more distance and speed. However, when he presented a difficult target, he would usually pair it with one a little less challenging. The beginning stations on his course featured a tricky true pair of rolling chondelle targets from left to right, very high, and curving inward, and then away. If you took too long to acquire the first shot, the second was headed down toward the ground like a runaway freight train! On another station, a teal was sent almost straight up and straight down, at about 50 yards, followed by an all edge 'straight at you' type incomer. Like Kruger's course, Robertson's targets were fair and hittable, without eye games or too-short windows, and set for all skill levels of shooters. Both courses offered a wide variety of entertaining targets and

the collective difficulty level was mild to moderate.

After the end of shooting on Saturday, Robertson passed out the preliminary and sub-gauge trophies and invited shooters to stick around and enjoy some excellent Mexican food 'on the house', and to see some trick shooting by Kruger. Also included for the evenings entertainment was special guest and mental training instructor, Lanny Bassham who gave a short but interesting talk on the subject of Mental Management and how it applies to shooting.

JON THE ENTERTAINER

For those who were not aware, Kruger is quite an entertainer with a shotgun, and puts on a fine display of trick shooting. He amazed the audience with some plain and fancy shooting.

Robertson, also an accomplished trick shot artist, joined Kruger, and together they ended the show by shooting helium balloons released into the night sky at some rather spectacular distances from the ground. Great fun and excellent shooting by both men!

Ballistic Specialties provided trophy's all the way down to tenth place in the classes, and three places in the Concurrents in the 200 target Main Event. The awards were beautiful etched glass plaques, as well as some Beretta knives engraved with the event and date. All ties for the Main Event and 5-Stand event were shot off simultaneously utilizing all four 5-Stand layouts, which greatly shortened the shoot-off process.

Wendell Cherry is this years Angle Port Open Champion. He shot a very consistent 93-92 for a fine 185 score. Cory Kruse was but one back, for runner-up. Master first through third was Tom Mack (183), Gary Fitzjarrell (181) and



WENDELL CHERRY – MAIN EVENT HOA.

Tony Rivera (178). In the Concurrents, Harold Steen (175) was Veteran Champion with Curtis Anderson second (174) and Tom Traylor third (173). Super-Vet went to Don Johnson on 150, with Ralph Cramer second (143) and A. Rossi third (118). Dr. Paula Benbow topped the Ladies with 150, followed by Deborah Richter (135) and Karen Johnson (130). Mike O'Brien took the Junior top spot with a 165, with runner-up Jake Montgomery (161) and Chase Williams third (159). Sub-Junior Stephen Murray blistered the course with a remarkable 167 with Leon Tan second (144) and Shane Henderson third (136).

This year's Angle Port Open was a fine, fun, enjoyable shoot, and the hospitality of Elm Fork Shooting Park was a real pleasure. Robertson and his family did an excellent job of handling this shoot, and with the help of Kruger, provided us with some fine targets – and with well-trained staff kept everything running smoothly. Those who live in and around Dallas now have another fine place to shoot!

