

# THE Angleport OPEN

A REPORT BY **PIRATE LANFORD**

Elm Fork Shooting Park sits on the same site as the old Winchester Gun Club – but that’s about all they have in common. Founded in 1964, the Winchester Gun Club was a state of the art Olympic training facility, but by 2002, it was on its last legs.

The Angleport Open moved to Elm Fork Shooting Park, in Dallas, Texas, two years ago, not long after Scott Robertson and Marc Richman took control and began rehabilitating the old Winchester Gun Club. The turnout in 2003, the first year, was disappointing –

perhaps because Elm Fork had no national acclaim, and locally it was infamous for the old club’s state of dilapidation. Word had not spread that the park had been transformed, and the grounds and equipment were in excellent condition making it one of the best shotgun facilities around. Word had not spread that Scott’s targets were inventive and challenging.

By the time the 2004 Angleport Open rolled around, the perception was quite the opposite, and that tournament was well attended both by local shooters

and by travelers from all parts of the country. Elm Fork had cemented its reputation for its friendly atmosphere, smooth organization, course layouts and diversity – and for its targets. This year 310 competitors shot registered targets from Thursday, March 17th, through Sunday, March 20th, in balmy spring weather.

Scott has 439 acres on which to lay out his course designs, and he uses all of it. There are two 13-station sporting clays courses, two FITASC Parcours, two permanent 5-stands, Make-A-Break and a ZZ

Bird Hélice ring – in addition to trap and skeet fields. For this tournament, there was also an ESPN Outdoor Games qualifier and three additional 5-stands.

## THURSDAY AND FRIDAY

Shooting on Thursday and Friday started with the sub-gauge events, the sporting Pre-lim and the 5-stand Pre-lim.

The sub-gauge events consisted of fifty targets each for 20 gauge, 28 gauge and .410 and were set up on the Meadows



**JUNIOR ALL AMERICAN JAKE MONTGOMERY, AT THE POND IN THE WOODS, WAS THE SUB-GAUGE HOA.**



**TONY RIVERA, MAIN EVENT HOA.**

course. Thursday's weather was just about as good as it gets. Flags hung limp in the calm air and the temperature climbed into the seventies. But on Friday, the wind blew hard from the south. It pushed targets out, knocked them down, kept them from turning a face and otherwise made them much more difficult than they were intended.

Starting by the rifle range, there were five 20 gauge stations, five 28 gauge stations in the middle of the Meadows, and five .410 stations at the end – with some co-mingling. I found them all to be a bit salty, but as Jake Montgomery proved, they were all breakable. Jake won the 20 gauge and .410 events and took the sub-gauge HOA trophy with a combined score of 132/150, thirteen birds ahead of second place Brent Barrett. (If you slip, you slide.) Arguably the most difficult targets were at station two of the 20 gauge course. On Friday, a teal and chandelle true pair were being blown out by the wind some twenty yards farther than planned. They would have been testy targets for a 12 gauge!

No one managed to break all

25 targets at either of the 5-stands in the 5-stand Pre-lim. Kenny Stringer came closest by missing only one target at each stand for the HOA score of 48/50. It is interesting to note that with the exception of E class, every class winner shot in the forties. Lest anyone assume that those high scores indicate a soft course, let it be known that all classes, including Master, had scores in the twenties!

The sporting Pre-lim was shot in the Woods, where Scott has usually given us targets that made us feel good about our shooting. It was in the Woods that Jon Kruger shot a perfect 100 at last year's Texas State Championship. I do not mean to distract from Jon's feat – if it had been that easy he wouldn't have been the only one, but he was, and remains so today.

Be that as it may, Scott must have tired of hearing 'soft' in reference to The Woods. This year there was nothing easy about it either in the Pre-lim or Main Event. The nature of the setting precludes many long targets – there are too many trees for that. High speed and short windows, targets bouncing off trampolines, triple simos and a strong measure

of deception kept shooters off balance. Dr. Nadim Nasir, Jr.'s 90 was the highest score of the sporting Pre-lim. The course held many a good shooter in the eighties and there were Master class scores in the sixties. Sub-Junior Joseph Rogers won AA class with a score of 81.

## SATURDAY AND SUNDAY

The wind laid Friday night and we were treated to cool mornings and warm afternoons on Saturday and Sunday. It was perfect weather for the Main Event, 100 bird 5-stand and FITASC.

The Woods course was not entirely in the Woods. Five of the thirteen stations were in the open, with longer targets. Station one had two flat and fast right to left crossers at about thirty and forty yards. Stations two and thirteen had crossers from the left that either stalled and fell or curled in. The other stations had closer targets, with more going away than coming in or crossing. Station four had two trampolines bouncing

MAIN EVENT	
HOA	TONY G RIVERA
RU	GARY GREENWAY
M1	MIKE WILGUS
M2	BRIAN HUGHES
M3	JACOB CALLAHAN
AA1	SCOTT RACKLEY
AA2	KRIS CARLSON
AA3	MIKE PRICE
A1	JUSTIN ROYAL
A2	JERRY MOSS
A3	JOSH HAMBY
B1	CASEY J BURDICK
B2	ROGER W KOLAS
B3	BRIAN HUNTLEY
C1	WADE GRIMES
C2	BUD HEATON
C3	DALE BULLION
D1	TAD RINEY
D2	MATT WRIGHT
D3	MICHAEL J PAQUE
E1	TAYLOR HUTCHISON
E2	SAM LOWE
E3	CHERYL WALDRUM
L1	DR PAULA L BENBOW
L2	CHRISTA LITTLEFIELD
L3	JENNIFER WALTON
SJ1	JUSTIN ROYAL
SJ2	JOEY BOLTON
SJ3	HUNTER EPPERSON
J1	JACOB CALLAHAN
J2	DAVID ALEXANDER
J3	CORY KRUSE
V1	GARY GREENWAY
V2	VANCE L BARNES
V3	CURTIS A ANDERSON
SV1	CESAR R ATHIE
SV2	CLETUS GRAVES
SV3	DON E JOHNSON

KENNY STRINGER, AT 5-STAND TWO, WON THE 5-STAND PRE-LIM.



DR. NADIM NASIR, JR. WON THE SPORTING PRE-LIM ON A TOUGH COURSE IN THE WOODS.



targets that quartered away from the left and right – many shooters misread the second target and never touched it.

The Meadows course was the more difficult of the two, but by only an average of a five bird margin – in the past, the difference has been as much as 12 targets. Report pairs dominated both courses, and two in the Meadows

required some footwork after the first shot. Both stations had fast, low targets quartering away to the left and then right, and no matter how fast one took the first and swung around for the second, it was getting some distance.

At station three, there was a pair of battues that came from traps on the other side of a levee. Neither could be seen until at or

after the zenith, and they were rarely shot until just before they hit the ground. Young guns with eagle eyes and quick-twitch reflexes shot them faster. Those in the squad of the ‘Grumpy Old Men’ often looked back in consternation after watching that second bird smash into the ground without having been seen until it was too late.

A true pair of chandelles crossed in front of station four, one from the left and one from the right, both were about 40 yards out. There wasn’t a gimmee station on the course.

Tony Rivera always shoots well at Elm Fork. He won HOA at the Texas State Championship last year and Runner-up at the Zone 6 Championship. He came back this year to take HOA at the Angleport Open with a 93 in the Woods and a

95 on the Meadows for a combined score of 188, two birds ahead of Runner-up Gary Greenway. There were a good many scores in the nineties in Master class, especially in the Woods, but there were but three in the other classes. Thanks to sponsorship by Russ Arnold, Main Event trophies were awarded five deep in every class.

**TOUGH FITASC**

Elm Fork would not have offered FITASC at the Angleport had there not been a compelling demand for it. It was not added until early February. The levee that Scott uses for the FITASC Parcours is the perfect place to lay out the demanding targets we expect in this event. Every trap is below the feet of the shooters at



RUSS ARNOLD (BOT. L) AND SCOTT ROBERTSON (BOT. R) PRESENT MAIN EVENT JUNIOR TROPHIES TO (TOP L-R) J2 DAVID ALEXANDER, J CH JACOB CALLAHAN, J3 CORY KRUSE, (BOT. L-R) J4 TRAVIS MEARS AND J5 HUB JOHNSON.



THE TRAMPOLINE STATION IN THE WOODS WAS A REPORT PAIR LEFT TO RIGHT AND RIGHT TO LEFT. THE SECOND TARGET CONFUSED MANY.

every peg. Some are only ten feet or so below – but some are 35 feet down and way far away. There are few obstructions on the plain below and the traps are clearly visible.

The gravity rabbit on Parcour two was the target most missed, but none of them were easy. There may be places in the country where people are accustomed to shooting down at targets, but it isn't here. There were several low targets coming in and going away at blistering speeds, and there were the high, graceful chandelles just on the edge of the effective range of a shotgun. When I see FITASC targets, I wonder how they can be hit.

They are hit, but no one ran either Parcour. The highest score on either was 22. Michael Coleman broke 22 on Parcour one and 21 on Parcour two for a combined HOA score of 43. Doug Fuller and Tony Rivera were right behind him with 42s.

## 5-STAND

Cory Kruse is the 100 target 5-stand champion with a combined score of 96. Brent Barrett followed as M1 with a score of 92. Seven

shooters ran 25 straight on one or other of the 5-stands, but no one ran 25 more than once. The four 5-stands had 25 targets each with one single and two true pairs at each station. With six traps at each field, there were 24 different targets and a multitude of combinations. No one field was more or less challenging than any of the others.

## GOOD ORGANIZATION

It took 60 extra scorekeepers, troubleshooters and other personnel to run the four day shoot. After the rain and mud at the State Championship last year, many of the regular referees were difficult to coax into returning. It is a credit to all the staff at Elm Fork that they were able to hire, train and supervise that many people and do it in a way that they were not noticed. We only notice bad calls and broken machinery – but hardly a nod goes to efficiency. If the referees do their job well, they are invisible, and the only time we should notice the traps is when they are being reloaded. At the Angleport Open we were free to focus on the targets.

Colette Rogers runs registration, the posting of scores and organizes the presentation of awards at Elm Fork and many other clubs in the area. She's been doing it long enough that glitches are rare, even with all the last minute changes in events by shooters. She's been doing it long enough that she knows most of the competitors. When the name 'Emmerson Biggins' appeared on a registration form, a flag went up. "Hooineel is this?" she wondered. Sleuth that she is, she went to the NSCA website and entered the shooter number. And now we are faced with the question, is National Champion Cory Kruse Emmerson Biggins, or is Emmerson Biggins Cory Kruse? And what are Emmerson Biggins? (Say thanks to Colette the next time you see her. She does a lot that no one ever sees).

If you shot every event, you racked up 650 registered targets at The Angleport. Cletus Graves shot every event and placed either first or second in the Super-Veteran concurrent class in all but one of them. If ever there was justification for an Iron Gun trophy

for endurance and persistence, this was it. Keep in mind that a Super-Veteran is older than Methuselah and probably came here from a planet outside our solar system. I'm going to have to meet this guy.

If a Super-Veteran can do it, then anyone should be able to shoot every event – but for some reason, no Ladies, Sub-Juniors, Juniors or Veterans did. There must have been others, but if there were, they were not in concurrent classes – and I don't get paid enough to cross-referencecheck 310 shooters over eight events!

We all go home and think about the targets we should have hit. We think about those little mistakes that make the difference between a trophy or punches. Even with 310 competitors, there isn't much room at the top, but no one ever goes home a loser. There are only the winners and those who made it possible for them. Forget about the prom queen.

The Angleport Open is one of the best shoots of the year – and Elm Fork is the perfect place for it. I'll be back next year. ■