

TRE' SIDES TOOK THE FIRST EVER
TITLE OF CLAYSHOOTINGUSA
CLASSIC CHAMPION, BUT IT
TOOK A HIGH PROFILE SHOOT-
OFF BETWEEN FEDERICO DEL
TORO, MICK HOWELLS, BILL
MCGUIRE AND BRENT BARRETT
TO SETTLE RUNNER-UP AND 1, 2
AND 3 IN MASTER CLASS.

TRE' SIDES – CLASSIC 2003 CHAMPION.



WESTSIDE STORY

MICHAEL BRUNTON REPORTS



Classic
2003

WESTSIDE SPORTING GROUNDS
HOUSTON, TEXAS

W RAY NEWMAN ON APPLETON STATION 5 WITH CHRIS BIDDLECOMBE FROM ENGLAND LOOKING ON.



HAND EXTENDED BOB PERIGRO TRACKS A LEFT TO RIGHT BATTUE ON STATION 2.



WENDELL CHERRY WITH WILL FENNELL CHECKING THE LEAD!



L TO R: GRAHAM BROWN AND BEN BRUNTON WHO SET THE TARGETS AND PLANNED THE THREE COURSES.

Westside Sporting Grounds in Katy, Texas was the venue for the ClayShootingUSA Classic – the first of an annual Championship that is sure to grow in stature as each year passes. Held the weekend before the Nationals, many competitors saw it as a warm-up before traveling on to San Antonio. The Saturday and Sunday Main Event was a 200 target Sporting Clays Championship shot over two courses. A 50 target 5-Stand, 100 target FITASC and Make-A-Break added to the weekend's excitement.

Targets for the three competitions were set by our own Ben Brunton and Graham Brown (owner of Purbeck Shooting School in England). Top line sponsors for the Sporting Championship included Appleton Rum, Armusa and Promatic who had shipped 110 traps from the UK specifically for the event while also providing full engineering back up and support.

APPLETON 100

The Appleton course, set to the north-side of Westside, included a wide range of traditional 'up-in-the-air' targets – crossers, loopers, incomers, teal and chandelles – from standards to midis. Stations 3 and 6 utilized high towers with the fast overhead going away target and high left to right crosser on station 3 and the 110ft overhead pair (midi and standard) on station 6 giving plenty to talk about! Stations 7, 8 and 9 over the ponds were relatively straight forward though the 5 yard left to right crossing rabbit on station 8 was missed more times than you would believe!

"Appleton was set for a 92-94/100," said Brunton, "so you can imagine our surprise when late on Saturday Bill McGuire and Jon Kruger were on for 95s or 96s with only two stations to go!" On his second to last station (2), McGuire looked unsettled with the slow left to right crosser at 30 yards followed by a 35 yard fast and flat right to left crosser – and dropped four. Kruger ran station 2 but dropped four on station 3 – a fast overhead going away and left to right off a tower. Both came in for 92 to head the halfway leaderboard.

Tre' Sides (91), Scott Robertson (89), Brent Barrett (90), Mick Howells (89), Federico Del Toro (89), Cory Kruse (87) and Wendell Cherry (86) were still in the hunt and all the talk at the Saturday evening Appleton Rum party was about Sunday's Armusa course.

ARMUSA 100

The Armusa course was set on the south-side of Westside – an area of the ground that had never been



CONNIE McELROY – GREAT JOB IN REGISTRATION.

THE ARMUSA COURSE WAS SET ON THE SOUTH-SIDE OF WESTSIDE – AN AREA OF THE GROUND THAT HAD NEVER BEEN SHOT BEFORE. FOR SEVERAL MONTHS PRIOR TO THE SHOOT, LOGAN SILKY, GROUND MANAGER, AND HIS STAFF, HAD BEEN HARD AT WORK CLEARING THE NEW GROUND – EXPOSING CREEKS AND WOODLAND THAT WOULD RESULT IN A COURSE THAT WAS VERY DIFFERENT TO THE NORTH-SIDE.



CORY KRUSE IN ACTION ON ONE OF THE FITASC PARCOURS.



ABOVE: RIGHT TO LEFT CHANDELLE BEHIND THE TREES, FOLLOWED BY A TEAL ON THE ARMUSA COURSE STATION 7. INSET: STATION 10 INCLUDED A RABBIT ON THE RIGHT HAND SIDE OF THE CREEK AND A GOING AWAY MIDI UP THE LEFT SIDE OF THE CREEK.



ARMUSA COURSE STATION 12 FEATURED A NASTY PAIR OF RABBITS DEEP IN A CLEARING 35 YARDS FROM THE SHOOTING POSITION.



THE ARMUSA COURSE, LIKE APPLETON, INCLUDED A PAIR OF OVERHEAD TARGETS (MIDI AND STANDARD).

shot before. For several months prior to the shoot, Logan Silky, Ground Manager, and his staff, had been hard at work clearing the new ground – exposing creeks and woodland that would result in a course that was very different to the north-side.

Two stations utilized the newly exposed creeks and banks. Station 9 included a long incomer that followed the creek, finally falling

and ‘plopping’ into the water 20 yards to your front. The on report left to right crosser, at only 12-15 yards and 6 feet above the water, had plenty of curl and ruined many a good card. Station 10 included a 25 yard rabbit running right to left along the top of a riverbank – but in between trees – followed by a fast going away midi that tracked up river with a dying curl to the right. Few ran this station!

Elsewhere saw a good variety of stations in the open – including directly overhead targets and high crossers – as well as teal, loopers, quartering away targets and diving crossers through the woods. Stations 12 and 4 were real heartbreakers. A left to right crossing rabbit at 35 yards followed by a quartering away right to left rabbit in a woodland clearing on Station 12 “were the meanest rabbits I’ve seen in years,” said Tre’ Sides. Station 4, a ten bird station, saw a low fast quartering away standard that crossed an opening at 35 yards and then disappeared into woodland, followed by a looper right to left, high over the tree line. Once Kruger had let four of the left to right crossers slip, this target was quickly voted “the stiffest of the two courses!”

McGuire and Kruger were out early on the first rotation – Kruger dropping an uncharacteristic 12 targets (88) to finish on 180 and McGuire one better (89) for 181. Brent Barrett maintained his

HAPPY FACES – MANY OF THE MAIN EVENT PRIZE WINNERS ON SUNDAY EVENING.



ONE STATION OF THE SHOOT-OFF WAS HELD ON THE PONDS BESIDE THE PARTY BARN.



FITASC AND 5-STAND PRIZE WINNERS.

L TO R: JOE CANTEY, FITASC RU AND JON KRUGER, FITASC HOA AFTER A SHOOT-OFF.



SHOOTING OFF FOR RU AND 1, 2, 3 MASTER WERE (L TO R) FEDERICO DELTORO, BILL MCGUIRE, BRENT BARRETT AND MICK HOWELLS.

consistency adding a 91 to his 90 on Saturday to also finish on 181. By mid-day Howells (93) joined the party on 181, as did Federico Del Toro (92).

While the challenges of Robertson (88), Kruse (88), Cherry (87), Gary Phillips (92) and Will Fennell (88) fell by the wayside, it was Tre' Sides that was steadily building a confident 95 to add to his 91 of Saturday. Clearly on form following his recent win at the National Wild Turkey Federation shoot, his total of 186 was to finally find him five targets clear of the field. Equally outstanding was Mike Benton's 95/100 on the tricky Armusa course – though his 77 the previous day dragged him down to a final 172 and Master's 9th.

In AA the tussle between Lee Anderson (161) and Foster Blair (160) saw Anderson take the honors by one target; Robert Clarke (165) was nine targets clear of Karl Smith (154) in A class and Tony Behrens (151) won B class. Other class winners included Randy Wright (C1-140), Luke Weckman (D1-133) and Frank Bruno (E1-100). Concurrent winners were Leon Tan (SJ-157), Connor Oman (J-169), Cindy Graham (L-152), Joe Cantey (V-174) and Bob Brister (SV-158).

SHOOT-OFF

And so to the Sunday evening Main Event shoot-off. Though Sides, the 2003 Classic Champion, had won the inaugural event comfortably, Howells, McGuire, Del Toro and Barrett would have to fight it out for Runner-Up and Master Class 1, 2 and 3. The shoot-off was held over two stations – one under the 110ft tower and the other over the pond – providing the most testing targets of the weekend. 40 yard

high crossers off the tower, 55 yard left to right rabbits and high 50 yard loopers – each in turn disappearing into balls of dust – turned the shoot-off into a 'demonstration' shoot of the highest order. Howells was first to depart taking M3 followed by Barrett (M2). McGuire and Del Toro were tied over another series of four pairs before going to sudden death – McGuire blinked first, leaving him in M1 and Del Toro as Runner-Up.



L TO R: JIMMY (TRAP MECHANIC), DAN DANIEL OWNER OF WESTSIDE, HIS WIFE LAURIE AND TOBY (TRAP MECHANIC). JIMMY AND TOBY TOGETHER WITH SIMON HURLEY AND ANDY PERKINS OF PROMATIC INC DID A FANTASTIC JOB KEEPING EVERYTHING RUNNING SMOOTHLY ON THE TWO SPORTING CLAY COURSES, FITASC AND 5-STAND.

MAKE-A-BREAK RAN THROUGHOUT THE CLASSIC WEEKEND.



L TO R: SCOTT ROBERTSON, BILL MCGUIRE AND JON KRUGER ENJOYING THE ABLE AMMO SPONSORED 5-STAND.

FITASC AND 5-STAND

During the weekend and the following Monday, 100 target FITASC and 50 5-Stand events were in full swing. The FITASC was shot over four layouts, old style – providing a truly competitive event with Joe Cantey, Gregg Wolf, Jon Kruger and Cory Kruse all finishing on 92.

The four layouts, sponsored by Krieghoff International, Royal Sporting, Promatic and Clay Cartridge Company were well balanced with a strong variety of standard, midi and mini targets. The significant number of speciality Promatic traps available ensured a strong mix of chandelles, teal, loopers, battues, rabbits as well as traditional crossers and trap type shots.

The shoot-off, that saw Jon Kruger take HOA and Joe Cantey M1, was yet another ‘demonstration’ shoot of the highest order – with targets up more than a notch or two. Elsewhere in the classes the winners were Christophe RJ Fejes (AA-80), Steve Hewlett (A-81), Kime Goodrum (B-76), Jean Blair (C-62) and Heath May (D-71). Concurrent honors went to W. Ray Newman (SV-77), Joe Cantey (V-92), Gregg Wolf (J-92), and Susan Wall (L-69).

Jon Kruger also won the 5-Stand that was generously sponsored by Able Ammo. This was a tough 50 target affair with only 13 competitors recording 40/100 or more. Kruger’s 46/50 was two targets ahead of RU Wendell Cherry. Class wins were recorded by James Jamison (M1-43),

George Murray (AA1-38), Kent Tan (A1-34), Kime Goodrum (B1-34), Laura Calhoun (C1-28), Robert Ruckert (D1-33) and Frank Bruno (E1-25). Concurrent honors went to Laura Calhoun (L-28), Stephen Murray (SJ-41), Connor Oman (J-42), Ron Honefenger (V-40) and Gus McFaddin (SV-33). Hunter class was won by Tim Riggs.

GREAT TARGETS!

Praise for the targets was unanimous. The variety of speed, angles and mix of targets set among a wide variety of terrain, trees and the clever use of towers and lifts made for some exciting targets. Distance was rarely used to beat the competitor – where it was, plenty of belly or dome was visible and there

was ample time to take the shot. Particularly noticeable was the number of speciality machines that Promatic had provided among the 110 traps that had been shipped from England specifically for the event. Our two target setters had clearly stamped an ‘English’ feel to the targets that were complimented by the ‘European’ type grounds and woodland of Westside.

“The competitors obviously enjoyed our first ClayShootingUSA Classic,” said Publisher Michael Brunton. “The variety and technical nature of the targets, the efficiency of the Westside staff, trappers and referees, the generous sponsorship of the industry and the atmosphere of the Classic leads me to confirm the Classic event in the calendar for 2004.” ■