

Up or down... it makes no difference

IT IS APPROPRIATE THAT I SHOULD START MY COLUMN THIS MONTH BY JOINING WITH THE TEAM HERE AT ClayShootingUSA IN CONGRATULATING BOBBY FOWLER JR. FOR BECOMING 2005 NATIONAL SPORTING CHAMPION.

If there is but one championship most would wish to win each year, it has to be The Nationals. This is what brings out the top 'names' to brave San Antonio's oppressive heat each year. Of the 1,200 competitors, the list of Master class entrants this year read like a 'Who's Who' in sporting. Fowler's score of 282 on four courses totaling 300 targets left him five targets clear of Runner-up, Brandon Powell. After the accolades came the juvenile comments in the web chatrooms suggesting that Fowler's gun up style of shooting was not appropriate to sporting clays. One wonders what it is about our sport that sees success greeted by the need for the minority to denigrate achievement? The purists will argue that sporting clays derives from, and is an alternative to, live bird hunting and that the game should be shot gun down, but the

simple fact is that under current rules of sporting clays every competitor has the choice of shooting gun down, off the face or gun up. The very best competitors, on either side of the 'pond', are capable of maximizing the advantages of all three styles dependent on target presentation. The ability and will to win such a prestigious title is based on practice, determination, good gun fit and total focus. Gun up or not, Fowler is the 2005 National Champion – and deserves everyone's admiration.

FROM RUSSIA

The second leg of the Triple Classic World Series was completed at Fox Lodge, Russia, in early October – a full report appears in this issue. Ben Husthwaite took the honors in the Triple Classic Krieghoff Parcours de Chasse, followed home by Richard Faulds and Cory Kruse. Faulds, current World and European FITASC Champion, added the Fox Lodge Sporting Classic title to his Highclere Castle title that he won earlier in June. His record speaks for itself and it is a privilege for us to have him publish a series of coaching articles in the coming months. His first contribution, in this issue, gives worthwhile tips on how to shoot long crossers.

The third and final leg of the Triple Classic World Series is to be held at The Meadows National Gun Club in Georgia, on March 9th-12th 2006. Entries from all over



the USA for the 200 target Main Event and 150 target Parcours de Chasse (a US FITASC Selection Shoot) would indicate that both events will be well supported with the Parcours de Chasse likely to be fully subscribed. With George Digweed, Richard Faulds, Ben Husthwaite and a host of top European Master class shooters also booked to attend this NSCA registered event, it is sure to represent a 'Clash of the Titans'. For full details and entry form for The Meadows visit www.tripleclassicsporting.com.

BUSY ISSUE

In addition to State, Zone and reports on The Nationals and the Triple Classic, this issue includes Lanny Bassham's regular column

that this month defines what is meant by shooting in 'The Zone'. A new series reviewing modern classic shotguns, by Richard Rawlingson, starts in this issue with a profile on Fratelli Piotti. Alan Rhone, our contributing gunsmith, looks at the question of grip dimensions and styles and Tom Thompson says a fond farewell to Vendor's Row at the Grand American. I am especially pleased that in this issue we have secured an exclusive interview with Ashleigh Hafley. This determined young lady, just 18 years old, has now joined the elite in Master class. The list of her achievements this year, topped by the Ladies HOA at this year's Nationals, is more than most of us could hope for in a lifetime.

Enjoy this issue. ■