

STEVE FISCHER REPORTS FROM
THE 2006 NATIONAL SPORTING CLAYS CHAMPIONSHIP

SHOWDOWN **IN SAN ANTONIO!**



**MAIN PICTURE: THIS YEAR'S TOP GUNS!
NATIONAL CHAMPION TONY RIVERA (CENTER)
WITH RUNNER-UP BILL McGUIRE (LEFT) AND
SECOND RUNNER-UP WENDELL CHERRY (RIGHT).**

**BELOW: PICTURED CENTER, K-KUP WINNER WITH A
PERFECT 100 STRAIGHT, CHAD COOLEY.**



Once again, at about half-past September, the NSCA opened its gates to welcome shooters into competition to determine the 2006 National Sporting Clays Champion. Whether an accomplished Master or a novice E class, eager competitors came from the four corners of the country – full of determination and enthusiasm, hoping to leave their mark on sporting clays' growing history.

Few words could better describe this yearly event than those we used to hear each Sunday afternoon as we watched the intro

to the 'American Sportsman' show which told of the "thrill of victory and the agony of defeat!"

(Remember the horrendous fall taken by that luckless ski Jumper in the opening video?!)

There were about 1,100 such stories at this year's Championship, some of which were of dreams that came true and personal bests attained. Others were of missed opportunities, shattered dreams and victories that would now have to wait another year to be realized. Stories like Bobby Fowler Jnr's and Dale Willroth's magnificent effort, one off on the K-Kup course, only to be bested by a perfect 100 shot by Chad Cooley on the last day of competition. For some it may have been the thrill of a first time 25 straight in FITASC or Compak – and for others the loss of a top

**MAIN EVENT LADY
CHAMPION, JANET TAUSCH
(CENTER) WITH DEBBIE WALL
RUNNER-UP (LEFT) AND
ASHLEIGH HAFLEY THIRD.**

**VETERAN FITASC
CHAMPION, CURTIS
ANDERSON, WITH
RUNNER-UP
MIKE BITTMANN.**



**SUPER VETERAN MAIN EVENT
CHAMPION RON SHAFER WITH
RUNNER-UP FRED ABBOTT.**

**MASTERS FIRST THROUGH
THIRD IN THE MAIN EVENT,
L-R GREGG WOLF,
JON KRUGER AND
BOBBY FOWLER JNR.**





score in class by one target. Such is the makings of memories from a National Championship that live on long after the last shot has echoed over the fields of competition.

THE BIG PICTURE...

I feel safe in saying that overall, this year's Championship reached a new height in positive comments from the shooters. Most pleasing was the major change of event locations resulting in new and interesting courses and target presentations. The Red, Green, Orange and Yellow courses were moved from their usual stationary stands around the asphalted pathways that have been used and re-used for the past few years. The two tall towers that would predictably send out those intimidating high crossing or quartering shots on the old Red and Green courses, year after year, now stood without use. The sub-gauge events were moved onto what used to be the permanent Green and Red courses. There were no stands between the long rows of skeet fields this year either.

The four sporting courses now stood in places where FITASC Parcours were once set, and the K-Kup grounds were moved up into the old Red Course, giving room for new

stands for the Red and part of the Orange course layout.

Master and AA FITASC remained in its usual place, while the Compak course was moved out in front of the lower skeet fields. A through E class FITASC was laid out from West to East starting from the Rifle range going to the East.

It was obvious to those who had made many trips to this shooting complex that much thought and hard work had gone into planning this year's Championship. Those who rented carts found them more conveniently located and close to where they would be used – although the costs was considered, by most, to be exorbitant at \$50.00.

Water was cold and plentiful and cold fruit and treats were usually found about half way around the courses – a nice touch and well appreciated by the shooters. In fact, about the only complaint heard was the comment that there was a shortage of porta-potties on the courses. Emergencies notwithstanding, perhaps a mother's sage advice to "go now, before we leave" would have covered that problem!

Another point that was suggested for some improvement was the food vending at the main Clubhouse – not because of poor quality, value, or taste, but because there was only one!



MOST OF THE FOUR COURSES HAD WELL HIDDEN MACHINES, ADDING TO THE EXCITEMENT OF THE SHOTS.

With 1,000+ shooters all requiring the usual ‘three square’s a day’ the long lines – especially at lunch – drove many competitors off grounds to Macky D’s, Sonic, BK’s or the ever popular WhataBurger chain.

games area was Mike Scallion’s ‘Extreme Shotgun Challenge’. Very much an offshoot to the ‘Make-A-Break’ game, it featured five targets with point values from 1 to 5, with an increasing degree of



WESLEY WILCOX
DAY 1 AND 2 LEADER.

PHOTO BY MIKE HAREEY

NEW IDEAS

Another great addition to this year’s event was a full 10 station practice course allowing shooters to work out a problem shot, test a new gun, or just warm up. Not being limited by a menu such as found on a 5-stand warm-up, the shooter could shoot as much or as little as needed and work on a particular shot for as long as they liked. The course was sponsored by Neil Chadwick and featured his new ‘Target Key’ system. A neat little ‘key’ with a micro-chip inside would insert into a slot on a control box on each station and would record the number of targets thrown. The shooter could shoot as many or as few as needed and the key would be ‘read’ back at the clubhouse as to the number of targets thrown – with the customer charged accordingly.

A new ‘one on one’ entry to the

target difficulty – 1 the easiest and 5 the hardest. Two shooters compete and each would, in turn, shoot a series of single targets (1 through 5) with the scores recorded, followed by five report pairs of the shooter’s choice, ending with five true pairs, also of the shooter’s choice. The highest total score would be the winner. Simple, quick, and fun. I expect we will see more of this game in the near future.

GETTING STARTED

With four days ahead, filled with multiple events, it took until day two’s scores were in on the various events to get an inkling of who might be on their way to a champion title. The usual suspects were clustered near the top of each leader board, either tied or one behind the other, and a picture was beginning to develop as to which of the courses in the Main Event was

THE TARGETS ON THE FOUR COURSES WERE NOW OPEN FOR COMMENT BY THOSE WHO HAD ALREADY SHOT THEM, AND MOST REPORTS WERE OF A POSITIVE NATURE, WITH SHOOTERS GIVING A THUMBS UP FOR QUALITY.

the toughest. This year proved to be different, as the scores coming in from the four courses were all pretty equal and after two days of competition, a Sub-Junior Master was leading the way! Wesley Wilcox stood alone at 142, having shot 72 on Orange and 70 on the Green – three ahead of Tony Rivera and the long list of one behind the other scores.

Wesley was an E class shooter early in 2004 and by the time he reached February 2005 had managed to work his way into AA. He would go on to take 15th place in Masters at this event with a score of 262 and would have most certainly finished much higher had it not been for a stumble (55) on the Yellow course. Nevertheless, his was a notable performance and worthy of special mention. Main Event Veterans, Mike Bittmann and Jack Concannon, were on a roll and tied at the top of that concurrent while the Ladies were all fairly close in score with the outcome open to change from several possible competitors.

The targets on the four courses were now open for comment by those who had already shot them, and most reports were of a positive nature with shooters giving a thumbs up for quality. Most agreed, however, that there was still too many true pairs, several of which would have been hard enough as a report pair – especially when the wind played with the presentations. Generally speaking, competitors felt that the difficulty level was pretty close to right and were glad that the targets had been stiffened a bit from previous years to more like what was expected for a National Championship. This certainly aligns with the theory that shooters are getting better and more sophisticated, and want to be challenged rather than appeased at a major competition such as this. Amen!



HUGE CRANES WERE BROUGHT IN FOR SEVERAL OVERHEAD PRESENTATIONS. SEVERAL WERE PRETTY FORMIDABLE, SENT AS TRUE PAIRS WITH SHORT WINDOWS AND A FALLING, CURVING FLIGHT LINE.

THE FITASC EVENT

Separated once again, with the Masters and AA shooters on one set of Parcours and A through E on another, positive comments were heard from the almost 500 competitors who signed on for this popular event. Feedback from the M-AA shooters was that they expected the targets to be a little more testing. It wasn't that the targets were too easy, but that each layout missed having that one or two shots that kicked in the old adrenalin buzz and made it more exciting. A couple of extra true crossers would have accomplished that, and it was suggested that since the Masters and AA were separated from the A through E class shooters, a few more tougher, faster and more technical targets would have been appropriate. This pretty much proved out when the top three shooters and the next 25 shooters from Master and AA put up a total of eighteen 25 straights and thirty-nine 24s on their four parcours.

Thankfully, there were no extreme wind or weather conditions to affect the presentations this year and all the competitors faced essentially the same targets each day. Any advantage at all would have probably

FITASC		
CHAMPION	JOSEPH A CAREY	97
RUNNER-UP	BRANDON POWELL	96
THIRD	JAYBIE CANTEY MD	96
M1	DIEGO DUARTE	95
M2	BILL MCGUIRE	95
M3	ANDY DUFFY	95
AA1	CARY SKAGGS	88
AA2	STEPHEN F JOHNSTON	88
AA3	RONNIE F LACK	87
A1	JAIME FONTANE MD	85
A2	JOHN E BAUER	82
A3	CHARLIE MARTIN	82
B1	TAYLOR HARRIS	85
B2	J DON WILLIAMS	82
B3	TODD STEINMETZ	80
C1	MIKE TREECE	82
C2	HOMERO J BERLANGA	82
C3	LYNN PELAN	80
D1	DESIRAE JA EDMUNDS	75
D2	BRAD LOVELAND	73
D3	GREGORY L MOFFETT	71
E1	MICHAEL HANSEN	60
E2	MARK S COLAW	57
E3	GWEN KETTERING	56
L1	DARBY JENKINS	89
L2	TRICIA KOCUREK	86
L3	CASEY O ATKINSON	82
V1	CURTIS A ANDERSON	95
V2	MIKE BITTMANN	91
V3	SAM C BENNETT	89
SV1	FRED ABBOTT	86
SV2	W RAY NEWMAN	85
SV3	RONALD SHAFER	85

been to the morning rotations with cooler temperatures and more clouds to block out the sun.

Champion Joseph Carey topped this event (24-25-24-24=97) with Brandon Powell (96) second, tied with Jaybie Cantey in third. Top

COMPAK		
CHAMPION	MIKE HAAS	93
RUNNER-UP	ANTHONY MATARESE JNR	92
THIRD	BOBBY FOWLER JNR	91
M1	TOM MACK	91
M2	SCOTT ROBERTSON	91
M3	TONY RIVERA	91
AA1	CARY SKAGGS	88
AA2	IMANOL ACHURRA	83
AA3	CLARK WALRAVEN	81
A1	JOHN STOCKWELL	90
A2	SHAWN LAUGHLIN	87
A3	CURTIS WRIGHT	86
B1	PAUL R PIERCE	88
B2	TOMMY MONTGOMERY	86
B3	KAYLE BROWNING	85
C1	JOSH GOMEZ	89
C2	ENRIQUE HINOJOSA	85
C3	JOHN L SULLIVAN	81
D1	CARLOS ODRIOZOLA	80
D2	DESIRAE JA EDMUNDS	79
D3	MIKE COELHO	79
E1	KYNDAL MIC CHILDERS	74
E2	GERALD MATHEWS	71
E3	PAUL HORSMAN	68
L1	JANET TAUSCH	86
L2	JENNIFER WALTON	80
L3	CHRISTA LITTLEFIELD	77
V1	GARY GREENWAY	88
V2	RON HONEFFENGER	85
V3	BOB L DAVIS	85
SV1	CARL SKIP ZAPFFE	77
SV2	RONALD SHAFER	76
SV3	JOHN W FARRELL	76

Master was Diego Duarte, followed home by Bill McGuire, Andy Duffy and Gregg Wolf. Concurrents honors went to Fred Abbott (SV-86), Curtis Anderson (V-95) and Darby Jenkins (L-89).

THE COMPAK EVENT

Almost 700 shooters entered this event, and were treated to some excellent presentations set over four layouts. In a more relaxed atmosphere this year, the 10-second time limitation between shots was dropped – to the shooters' advantage. Those who had the misfortune to shoot on a squad of only two or three shooters, instead of the needed six, had trouble with the disrupted flow and never got to realize the full potential of the game.

K-KUP		
CHAMPION	CHAD G COOLEY	100
RUNNER-UP	BOBBY FOWLER JNR	99
THIRD	DALE WILLROTH	99
M1	TODD SIMMONS	98
M2	JAYBIE CANTEY MD	97
M3	JON KRUGER	97
AA1	TONY MORROW	93
AA2	SCOTT GARRETT	90
AA3	SHAHID SHARIF	89
A1	SHAWN LAUGHLIN	91
A2	BRANDON BARTEL	88
A3	MAURICE MCDANIEL	87
B1	RUSSELL JORDAN	85
B2	ALAN WRIGHT	84
B3	ROBERT WILCOX	82
C1	SERGIO A CAVAZOS	87
C2	REID KYKER	86
C3	ENRIQUE HINOJOSA	84
D1	CARLOS ODRIOZOLA	85
D2	RALEIGH T MORRISON	82
D3	H GARCIA-ROJAS	80
E1	PAUL HORSMAN	73
E2	KYNDAL MIC CHILDERS	73
E3	CLARK AMOS	72
L1	DEEANN MASSEY	90
L2	JANET TAUSCH	90
L3	TRICIA KOCUREK	86
V1	TIM MURPHY	93
V2	CURTIS A ANDERSON	93
V3	M DAVID CHANDLER	92
SV1	CARTER G STANTON	90
SV2	GUS MCFADDIN	89
SV3	CARL SKIP ZAPFFE	88

However, the targets presented were good and the four layouts alternated between all true pairs and report pairs. Several of the true pair presentations could be attempted either way, but generally, one way was better than the other and it was up to the shooter to figure out just which target should be shot first. An error in this selection process would frequently produce a long and hard second barrel! The difficulty level also progressed as the shooter moved through the fields with layout 4 appearing to be the most difficult to the average competitor. Looking back, I would say that the Compak presentations, for the most part, were tougher than the FITASC layouts!

The scores from the top guns reflected the degree of difficulty with Champion, Mike Haas,



SHOOTER BILL ETHERIDGE SMOKED THIS TRUE PAIR, TWICE GETTING BOTH CLAYS WITH ONE SHOT!



PHOTO BY MIKE HAFLEY

**TONY RIVERA
NATIONAL CHAMPION.**

scoring 23-23-23-24=93, four targets less than the top score in FITASC. Anthony Matarese Jnr (92) came in second, followed by Bobby Fowler Jnr (91) for third place. Masters went to Tom Mack. In the concurrents, the Super Veterans was won by Carl 'Skip' Jaffee (77), Gary Greenway (88) topped the Veterans and Janet Tausch (86) took the Ladies.

MANY SIDE EVENTS

The always popular sub-gauge events of 20, 28, and .410 were well attended with close to 300 shooters opting to compete in each of these side events. Although enthusiastic, the shooters in the pump gun event only numbered 38 competitors and

the side by side faired only slightly better with 46 shooters. The results of these events, as well as those for the complete National Championship, can be found at the NSCA web site www.mynsca.com and at www.wyshotgun.com

THE K-KUP

This event is usually most looked forward to each year because frankly, it features the best target presentations. This year the general consensus was that it didn't get the usual high marks and was too laden with true pairs – some of which would be in short windows or would have been just as tough if offered as report pairs instead. Not

all agreed that this course was soft, although the top guns shot record high scores. Moved from its usual location to the area of the old Red course, this event still attracted almost the same amount of shooters as the Main Event, coming in with just under 1000 competitors.

Early in the week, the 1999 winner of this event (and the 1999 FITASC and Main Sporting Event as well!) Jaybie Cantey, now Doctor Cantey, showed he hadn't lost much of his shooting skills while buried in medical books for several years, by posting 97. It looked pretty strong until the weekend when Bobby Fowler Jnr jumped into the lead by dropping just one target for a 99! Not to be outdone, Dale Willroth also put up a fine score of 99 – but that wasn't to be the end of it. Well known to the live bird rings, pigeon shooter, Chad Cooley, went one better taking HOA with a perfect 100. (Proverb: *don't ever count your 'pigeons' before they're hatched*).

In the concurrents, Tim Murphy (93) topped the Veterans, Carter Stanton (90) took the Super-Veteran honors, while the top Lady was DeeAnn Massey (90).

BACK TO THE MAIN EVENT

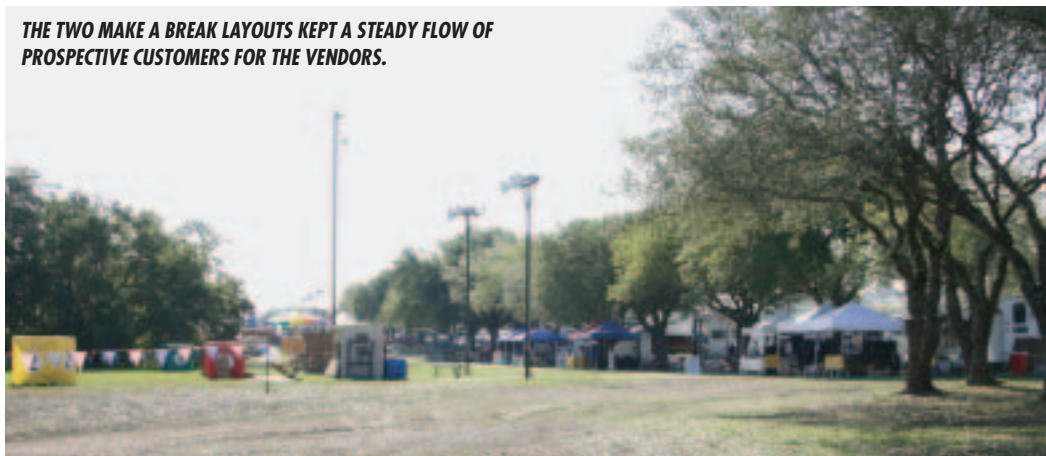
Someone asked on the internet sporting clays chat room "who might win this year's National

THE RESULTS

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

CHAMPION	TONY RIVERA	277
RUNNER-UP	BILL MCGUIRE	274
THIRD	WENDELL CHERRY	273
M1	JON KRUGER	269
M2	GREGG WOLF	268
M3	BOBBY FOWLER JNR	267
M4	BRANDON POWELL	267
M5	ANTHONY MATARESE JNR	266
AA1	GRANT S HULING	252
AA2	STEVE SHEPHERD	249
AA3	JOSH J TAYLOR	248
AA4	CARY SKAGGS	244
AA5	FRED ABBOTT	243
A1	MATTHEW HOFFMAN	243
A2	ERIC HARVEY	243
A3	MIKE ROUTH	237
A4	BOB QUEALE	232
A5	CHARLIE CULPEPPER	229
B1	TAYLOR HARRIS	230
B2	KAYLE BROWNING	226
B3	DENNIS J TAYLOR	226
B4	GARY GAHLINGER	223
B5	MIKE HERMAN	222
C1	REID KYKER	219
C2	DONALD ADAMS	218
C3	JAMES RICHARDSON	218
C4	CRAIG PARKER	217
C5	ENRIQUE HINOJOSA	216
D1	DESIRAE JA EDMUNDS	219
D2	MATT CAVNESS	212
D3	JACK JR BAUMANN	206
D4	RALEIGH T MORRISON	201
D5	ALEX SARACHO	200
E1	KYNDAL MIC CHILDERS	197
E2	JEFFREY S MILLIGAN	195
E3	PAUL HORSMAN	191
E4	MICHELLE ESTES	174
E5	ANGELA JENNINGS	172
L1	JANET TAUSCH	241
L2	DEBORAH E WALL	238
L3	ASHLEIGH HAFLEY	236
VL CH	DIANE S NELSON	217
VL2	SUSAN WALL	199
VL3	JANE E SINGLETON	196
V CH	MIKE BITTMAN	261
V2	JACK CONCANNON	260
V3	RON HONEFENGER	253
SV CH	RONALD SHAFER	245
SV2	FRED ABBOTT	243
SV3	JEROME R HOLDEN	236

THE TWO MAKE A BREAK LAYOUTS KEPT A STEADY FLOW OF PROSPECTIVE CUSTOMERS FOR THE VENDORS.



Championship?”. Many names were offered and several came up more than once – top guns like Wendell Cherry who has been on top of his game most of the year was a favorite, as was Bill McGuire. Also included in that list were other recognized top guns such as Bobby Fowler Jnr, Scott Robertson, Anthony Matarese Jnr and Jon Kruger. Naturally, there were a few ‘clever’ selections such as Elmer Fudd and Bill Clinton – which were good for a chuckle or two – but no one picked the actual winner. The 2006 National Sporting Clays Championship was won by Texas’ own Tony Rivera, shooting steady and consistent, scoring 71-71-68-67=277. Runner-up was Bill McGuire (274) with Wendell Cherry (273) claiming the third place. Master class places 1

through 3 went to Jon Kruger (269), Gregg Wolf (268) and Bobby Fowler Jnr (267). Trophies were awarded 15 deep in class. Class and concurrent results are shown in our results panel.

LOOKING BACK

Now that another year is in the books, looking back, this Championship has to go down as

one of the best yet. As always, there were a few problems with short delays, broken machines or inexperienced score keepers, but overall, this competition was well thought out and executed. The changes made to the courses was needed and well appreciated by those who have been to San Antonio so many times over the

past few years. We can now look forward with renewed interest to see just what new and neat things will be found waiting for the eager competitors at the 2007 National Championship. Nice job and well done to those who made this year’s competition a success! ■



LAYOUT #2 OF THE COMPAK EVENT. ALL FOUR LAYOUTS WERE WELL IN FRONT OF THE SKEET HOUSES AND THE CLEAR BLUE SKIES HELD ON ALL WEEK.