

Tough targets!

THE WORLD FITASC CHAMPIONSHIP, HELD IN LATE JULY IN THE GROUNDS OF THE KONOPISTE ESTATE, SOME 25 MILES FROM THE CENTER OF PRAGUE (CZECH REPUBLIC), INCLUDED TARGETS THAT WERE TOUGHER THAN MANY EXPECTED!



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Some 918 competitors from 30 nations completed this year's 200 target World FITASC Championship. 588 Seniors, each completing eight Parcours, resulted in 4704 Parcour scores. Of this total, there was only one score of 25/25, six scores of 24/25 and 30 scores of 23/25!

Target presentations were tough. Not unexpectedly, many of the AA and Master class shooters enjoyed the challenge – the degree of difficulty being commensurate with the standard expected of a World Championship. Those in the lower classes probably found the going a little tough – but what's new I can hear you say.

Wendell Cherry tells me that "Each Parcour of this championship had its own individual personality – and over the eight layouts there was no excessive repetition. I

thought the Forest Enterprise layout was the best that I have ever shot. Standing at the base of a mountain you had great driven birds for the first two pegs and the last two pegs were more power birds. Many of the pairs required excessive gun movement to pick up the second target, making it a real challenge. In some cases you had a driven bird and on report a trap shot. In other cases you had double trap shots as true pairs and trap shot with teal as true pairs. No matter which way you shot them, it made the second a lower percentage shot. All in all I would love to have a steady diet of those targets."

Difficult and or technical presentations is one thing, but at this event competitors also had to cope with tough targets – literally tough – as in tough, hard and difficult to break. Hugh Smith, Chief Referee for the event, tells me the ecological targets used were more resistant to pellet strikes than most other conventional targets, as illustrated in the photograph. One has to wonder if this too, contributed to lower scores than expected for some.

Over the last few years, the growing strength in depth of US competitors on the World FITASC stage has become very apparent – well illustrated by the medal haul at this year's Championship. Team USA medalled in all categories (Ladies – Bronze, Veterans – Bronze, Juniors – Bronze, SuperVeterans – Gold and Seniors – Gold) while individual medal winners included Diane Sorantino (Ladies Gold), Joey Bolton (Junior Silver) and Joe Cantey III (SuperVeteran Gold). Great job.



LOST! THE ECOLOGICAL TARGETS USED FOR THE WORLD FITASC WERE NOT EASILY BROKEN – NOT EVEN WHEN WELL HIT, CENTER PATTERN.

WEB WEARY

Online shoppers seem to be tiring of buying at the click of a mouse and are heading back to the hustle and bustle of retail outlets. Some consumer experts suggest that a turning point has been reached.

They predict the growth in web sales will fall off in the coming years. U.S. online sales growth is falling in 18 of 24 categories, including sporting goods, car parts and even music and videos. The reason is said to be unsustainable growth and online sellers' increasing their delivery charges.

However, it also appears that many shoppers are starting to feel that it's too much like work to browse online at sites that are remote and impersonal. The interactive 'shopping experience' (see, touch and feel) still has its attractions.

Those shotgun manufacturers and equipment suppliers that heavily rely on sales from their websites would do well to continually and regularly re-evaluate and update their sites – particularly as regards ease of information access, accuracy of content, graphic illustrations, enquiry response and product delivery on receipt of order.

SEEING IS BELIEVING

Elsewhere in this issue Dave Holmes, budding film director, reports on the training and gunfitting benefits of small screen analysis. Using a digital video camera and frame by frame playback on your home computer gives the opportunity of fine tuning gunfit, spotting errors in technique and even recording shot patterns. As Dave says, "it's darn near impossible to feel what we would see if we could only see what it is we are feeling." Get the digital camera out and give it a try – it makes good sense.

This issue includes reports on all the top championships of recent weeks, including the World FITASC Championship and the All American Sporting Clays & World FITASC Challenge presented by the Boomer Esiason Foundation. A new article series, starting this issue, is a question and answer problem solving column – you ask the questions – and our resident panel of Bob James and Tim Woodhouse give you the answers. Together with other technical and instructional articles, news and new products and our regular columns from Bruce Buck (Technoid), Lanny Bassham (Mind Games) and Richard Rawlingson (Classic Guns), ensures it's another great issue to enjoy. ■