

A REPORT BY
STEVE FISCHER

IF I HAD TO PICK MY PERSONAL TOP FIVE FAVORITE SHOOTING GROUNDS IN THE US, WITHOUT DOUBT, CARIBOU GUN CLUB WOULD BE ON THAT LIST. THERE'S JUST SOMETHING ABOUT THE PLACE THAT DRAWS ME THERE LIKE A MAGNET.

The terrain is just marvelous, giving the target setter and shooter a variety of rolling hills combined with wide open spaces, wooded areas filled with cottonwoods, birch, maple and oak trees that blends nature's natural scenic beauty into the overall shooting experience. Located just about an hour from the International airport in Minneapolis, even the drive to the ground is pleasant, passing the many farms that dot the roadway that leads you into LeSeuer (MN), where Del Monte canned vegetables logo, the "Jolly Green Giant", freshly painted and 60 feet tall stands at the towns entrance welcoming all to the area.

No stranger to major events, Randy Voss and the Caribou Gun Club staff have hosted several Pan Am and FITASC Nationals in prior years. This time they offered the 200 target FITASC National Championship and the 200 target Promatic Sporting. Early birds got

a special treat on Thursday by competing in a 100 target Super-Sporting event. In case you're not familiar with Super Sporting, it's similar to regular sporting with the exception that there are three machines on each stand, providing the shooter with an additional target in the mix. It's a fun game, and fast gaining in popularity and is being offered more frequently at sporting events. Friday also had a 100 target Beretta Pre-lim to get you into the groove and warmed up for the first three Parcours of some excellent and exciting FITASC. Saturday would also have three Parcours of FITASC and the first 100 of the Promatic Sporting, with two FITASC layouts remaining on Sunday as well as the

second 100 of the Promatic event.

Anyone who has been to Caribou knows that the target setting is always top notch. The only question that remained was what the weather would do for the four days of the shoot. Cool and breezy temperatures in the 50s at night and 60s during the day with flat gray clouds in every direction would hang in all the way to Sunday, when the sun finally decided to come out and the temperatures moved into the mid 70s.



**CARIBOU
GUN CLUB
HOSTS THE 2009
FITASC
NATIONALS**



It's a blast!

Thursday's Super Sporting event was loads of fun and that third target in the mix made for some interesting stations. To give an idea of how it worked, for example, a station's menu would read something like: single A – single B – single C, A report B, B report C, C report A, with A being a quartering left to right shot, B a quartering right to left shot and C a teal. The game requires just a bit more concentration and focus with that extra target's trajectory to remember.

Caribou has several sporting courses and this event was set in the wooded area that rambles through a very picturesque and hilly part of the facility. A small stream meandering through it only added to the ambiance. The targets were, for the most part, set at a moderate level and the overcast and breezy weather was probably the reason there were so few scores higher than 90.

Wendell Cherry came well prepared and almost aced the course, shooting a remarkable 98 for HOA. Curtis Mauldin took the runner-up spot with a fine score of 96. Will Fennel would be the only other shooter to score 90 or better and topped Master class. The concurrent winners were Joe McHenry (SV-87), Greg Cook (V-86), Chad Jensen (J-83), Nolan Springeler (SJ-67) and Robin Ostrander (L-71).

Beretta Pre-lim

Friday showed more of the same in weather, and it looked as though the wind and gray skies would be in for the duration of the shoot. The only real problem for the shooters was the lack of light to brighten some of the layouts and that occasional blast of wind that

makes the targets dance – usually just about perfectly timed when the shooter has committed to the shot. This layout was on the opposite side of the main road and was set where several previous years FITASC events were held.

A small valley filled with fresh growing corn was surrounded by some of the natural hilly terrain and provided for some very entertaining presentations. Targets were thrown up hill, downhill, across the hills and occasionally below the shooter's feet. One of the best features of this course was its scenic beauty, courtesy of Mother Nature, as the shooting stations circumvented the valley.

Mauldin aced out Cherry in this event although both tied at 97, putting Cherry in the runner-up spot. Master first was another tie at 96 with Jon Kruger beating Greg Wolf. In the concurrents the Super-Veteran HOA went to Bob Davis (86). Just recently hitting the ranks of Veteran, Bob Haynes (85) took top Veteran spot. Drew Benson (87) won the Juniors, top Sub-Junior was Brian Green (83) and Darby Fennell (86) won Ladies.

Promatic 200

As always, it seems that to get a big attendance at a FITASC event, even a National Championship, you'd better have plenty of sporting targets – and Caribou accomplished that task, ending the week's event with a 200 target Sporting sponsored by Promatic. Using the existing courses from the previous Super Sporting and Beretta Pre-lim, a complete change of targets (and some shooting stands) were used to give the competitors fresh presentations.

Saturday's targets were set on the wooded course where the Super Sporting had been. With the wind and the overcast skies still with us, the wooded layouts did offer some protection to the targets from the wind. Still, there was some dancing and prancing going on when the wind could get to the target, or the shooter let the shot develop a bit too far out. As always, the 'big guns' took it all in their stride and still managed to score up into the 90s – seemingly with ease.

Sunday saw a big change in wind and weather, with the heavy

winds gone. The skies opened up with lots of blue showing between the much smaller and well separated puffy white clouds. Truly a 'bluebird' day with the temperatures now into the mid 70s, allowing the competitors to shed their heavier clothing and wind breakers.

Jon Kruger has been winning tournaments just about as long as the NSCA has been in existence – and you will almost always find his name somewhere near the top of the leader board in just about every event he enters. Dropping only 11 targets over two days shooting, his 92-97=189 took HOA of this Promatic 200 event. Fennell's 187 put him in the runner-up spot, with Mauldin one back at 186. Concurrent honors went to Dave Lauzen (V-169), Bob Davis (SV-182), DeeAnn Massey (L-158) Brody Sykes (J-175) and Nolan Springeler (158).

What We Came For!

Three days of challenging layouts and excellent targets set on some virgin land saw the FITASC event begin on Friday. These targets



MOST OF PARCOUR 6 WAS DOWNHILL.

These targets truly tested competitor's abilities and pushed them to dig deep within themselves. Not just for their ability to hit a challenging target, but one to make them reach into their confidence and skill levels by putting them into often unfamiliar territory.



truly tested competitor's abilities and pushed them to dig deep within themselves. Not just for their ability to hit a challenging target, but one to make them reach into their confidence and skill levels by putting them into often unfamiliar territory. That, I believe, is the magic that avid FITASC shooters come for. They just love the feeling of hitting a target, or series of targets, that make them go beyond the usual test of being able to shoot three or four repetitive pairs of sporting targets. The variety of singles and the combinations of tricky pairs feeds that inner desire and satisfies that certain need to excel and break targets that would make

shooters of other modalities weak at the knees.

At the end of the first day of shooting, as always, it was too soon for predictions, but the usual suspects were all doing well at the top of the leader board with scores in the mid to high 60s. That began to change at the end of day two, with six Parcours in the bag. It also became clear that Parcours 1, 2 and 5 were probably the most challenging and Parcours 4 and 6 were the most user friendly. That left Parcours 3 and 7 somewhere in the middle.

The variety of shots on each was as varied as the terrain they were set on. Big teals and

chandelles along with crossers both near

and far, fast and slow, and a good mix of everything else were found on each layout. Parcours 1 and 2 were especially memorable, not just because of their difficulty level, but because of the beautiful spot they were set on. The shooting pegs were on the top of a long rise that overlooked a deep and wide valley. Stunning.

Sunday saw the start of the last two Parcours. At this point, the winner could still have been any of several shooters who were just a target or two apart. The shooter's finishing layouts and the degree of difficulty would make the difference as to who would be the top gun and well into the classes and concurrents.

As it turned out, the name at the top was one that has spent quite a bit of time sitting at the top

of leader boards for the past couple of years. Wendell Cherry took the title as the 2009 National FITASC Champion shooting a 178 total. Runner-up went to Curtis Mauldin (176) and in third place was Steve Green (175). Tom Ruck (174) won Master class. Concurrent honors went to Lewis McMurran (V-161), Bob Davis (SV-164), Sandra Cogdill (L-150) and Brody Sykes (J-167).

With the book closing on the 2009 National FITASC, Randy Voss and the Caribou Gun Club did an excellent job of presenting a true championship event. Their enthusiasm and hard work was evident everywhere. I'll be looking forward to another major event at Caribou soon – something like a U.S. Open perhaps? Now there's a thought. ■



RANDY VOSS AWARDS THE FITASC TOP THREE. L TO R: STEVE GREEN (3RD), WENDELL CHERRY (1ST) AND CURTIS MAULDIN (2ND).



LADY FITASC CHAMPION SANDRA COGDILL.



SOME OF THIS YEAR'S WINNERS UNDER CARIBOU'S NEW FLAG AND AWARDS PLATFORM.