

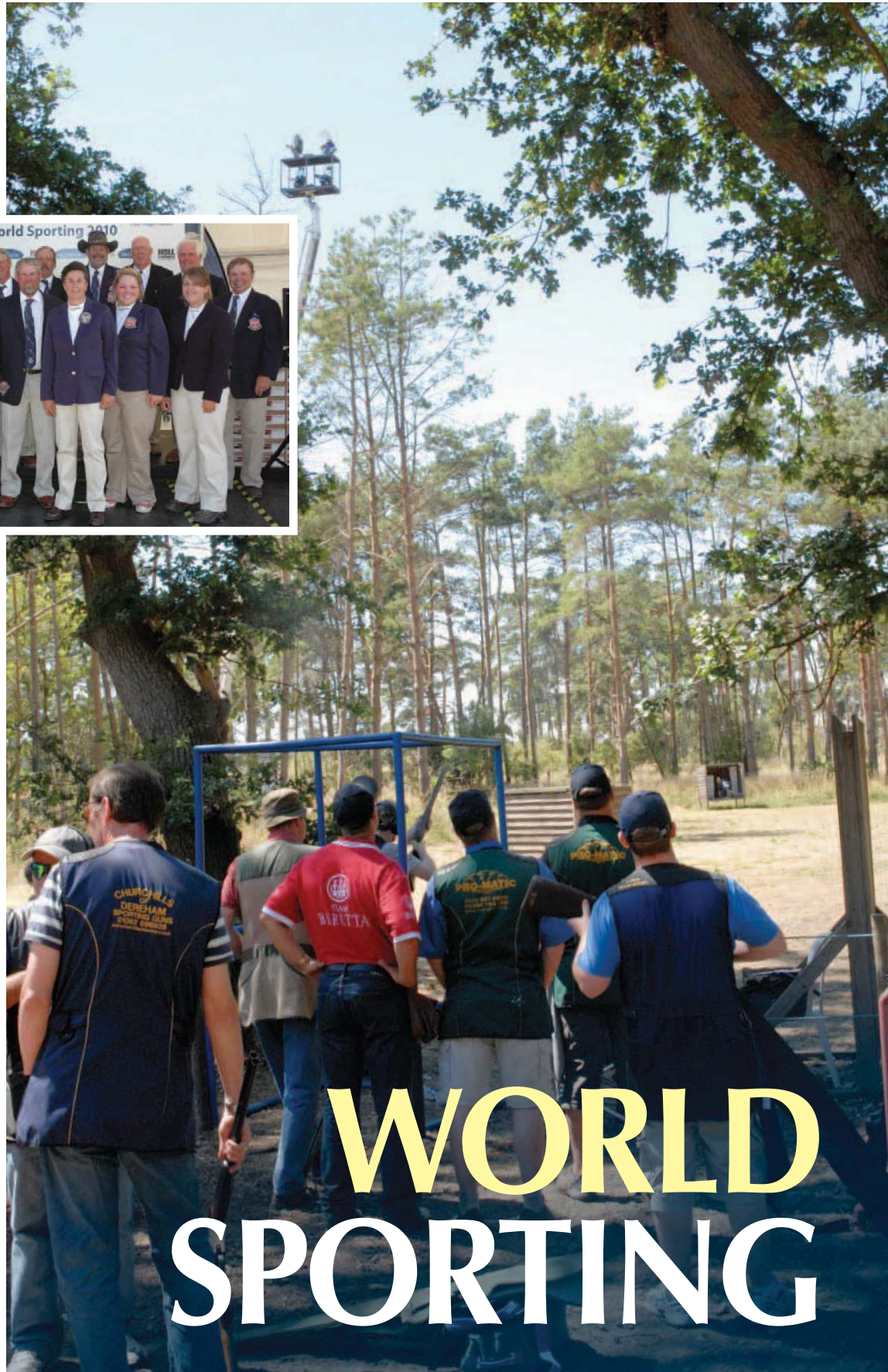
## TEAM USA.



Starting 2011 there will be two English Sporting World Championships each year and two World champions – somewhat devaluing the importance of this, the ultimate sporting clays title.

Traditionally, the World English Sporting Championship, organized by the NSCA and the UK-based Clay Pigeon Shooting Association (CPSA), has alternated the venue each year between the US and the UK. But no more. The International Clay Target Shooting Federation (ICTSF), working in conjunction with the CPSA, plans to have its own 2011 World Championship to be staged in New Zealand next February while the NSCA is sure to hold its own event in San Antonio at the end of next April.

For some years now there has been valid criticism surrounding the format of the World Sporting Championships. American shooters would have liked to see the alternate year event in the US rotate among their premiere grounds rather than always be in San Antonio. When the event is held in the UK, it's usually staged as a two-day weekend event attracting 6-700 shooters with few



# WORLD SPORTING

supporting events, never vendor friendly and not attracting the kudos it deserves. Then there are those, on both sides of the pond, who feel that by rotating the shoot exclusively between the US and UK does not do much to ensure participation from other countries to ensure it is truly a World Championship – something that the World FITASC Championship seems to achieve each year – in spades.

Despite such criticism, the World Sporting Championship has long been a popular event and well supported. It will be interesting to see if the changes planned for 2011 onward will be for the better – many fear not!

## Big Effort

The 2010 World Sporting Championship was held at Lakenheath Clay Target Centre in Suffolk, England (7-10 July). Situated in more than 100 acres of beautiful Breckland countryside,

Lakenheath hosted the World Championship in 2008 and this year went all out to ensure it was a memorable conclusion to the current series of World Championships.

With the extra effort by Lakenheath to combine several sporting side events with the Main Event, they were probably disappointed with the 550 plus entry level for this year's World Championship. For US shooters, those from Scandinavia and some other Europeans, the attraction was to shoot the World Sporting back to back with the World FITASC Championships in Italy the week after. With hindsight, many UK shooters may have found this too expensive in these difficult economic times, opting to only shoot the World FITASC that attracted over 1000 plus entries. It's also true to say that the marketing in the lead up to this year's World Sporting Championship left much to be desired. The lack of hype for such



an important event also resulted in a poor show of vendors.

However, the CPSA did attract Promatic as the lead sponsor who provided additional traps, cables and batteries to support the Lakenheath set-up. They also provided engineering back-up and on course assistance to support John Dyson who set the targets. This year's ammunition sponsor was Hull Cartridge Co Ltd. Pete

Usher and his team certainly had their hands full for this five day event. Wednesday and Thursday was given up to a 150 target FITASC, Friday offered a 100 target Pre-lim and during Thursday and Friday there was a 100 target Sportrap (European equivalent of 5-Stand). The 200 target World Championship was held on the Saturday and Sunday – all on 100 plus acres. Careful planning had courses and events switched out each evening until late – with targets for the next day checked at 6am before shooting. It was a massive effort behind the scenes that saw each event start and finish on time quite seamlessly – a credit to all.

First up was the 150 target FITASC. Disappointingly it only

**BEN HUSTHWAITE  
2010 WORLD  
SPORTING CHAMPION.**



**THE 2010 PROMATIC SPONSORED WORLD ENGLISH SPORTING CHAMPIONSHIP, WON BY BEN HUSTHWAITE, WILL GO DOWN IN THE HISTORY BOOKS AS THE LAST TIME THAT THE REIGNING WORLD CHAMPION CAN CLAIM TO BE THE 'BEST SPORTING SHOT' IN THE WORLD THAT YEAR.**

# ENGLISH CHAMPIONSHIP

**MICHAEL BRUNTON** REPORTS FROM LAKENHEATH CLAY TARGET CENTRE IN ENGLAND



attracted just over 100 entries. The six layouts offered up a good mix of challenging and entertaining targets. Layouts 1-3 were the more shooter-friendly, each straighted three times with numerous 24s on the scoreboard. Targets on layouts 4-6 were a little more technical with some distance added to the mix. Top score on Layout 4 was a single 24 while Layout 5 was straighted by US Super Veteran

Michael Taylor. Layout 6 threw up two straights – one of which was US shooter Brian DuQuesnay.

Consistency was required to score well, and despite a 21 on Layout 5, Ben Husthwaite topped the leaderboard after the 25 bird Super Final with a score of 136 + 21. Top showing from US shooters came from Gebben Miles (A class 3rd), Brian DuQuesnay (B class 2nd and Veteran 3rd), Diane Sorantino (Ladies winner), William Henderson (Junior 2nd), Justin Fox (Junior 3rd), Michael Taylor (Super Veteran 2nd), Floyd Hartlage (Super Veteran 3rd) and Hunter Milligan (Colt winner).

## Pre-lim and Sportrap

Some 170 competitors lined up for the 100 target Pre-lim. Many competitors were surprised at the level of difficulty (and resulting scores), perhaps an indication of what was to come in the Main Event. Top score came from Mark Winsor (UK) with a 94. Scott



L TO R: DIANE SORANTINO, ASHLEIGH HAFLEY AND JENNI CLARK.

Robertson (92) was runner-up after a shoot-off with Willy Gordon (Scotland) and Gebben Miles. Gordon took third place and Miles was the AA winner.

The US concurrenents put up a great display. Ladies 1st, 2nd and 3rd went to Diane Sorantino, Jenni Clark and Ashleigh Hafley respectively. Cristobal Leal (87) won Juniors, followed by Justin Fox (86) in second. Floyd Hartlage (85) and Pete Hendrick (83) were second and third in Veterans and Jenni Clark (83) and Hunter Milligan (81) were first and second in the Colts.

The Sportrap was standard

SCOTT ROBERTSON



fare, but the heat was turned up in the 25 target Super Final. Sadly the US had only one representative in the shoot-off – Scott Robertson – who finished up as AAA class winner. Mark Marshall (UK) was the Super Sport winner (96 + 23), Richard Faulds was second (96 + 21 + 10) and Dave Hughes third (94 + 23 + 9). Once again, the US concurrenents performed well with Carolyn Smith (80) taking Ladies third place, Justin Fox (93) was top Junior with Kyler Ford (92) second, Floyd Hartlage (86) won Veterans and Hunter Milligan (82) took Colts.



THE SIX FITASC LAYOUTS OFFERED UP A GOOD MIX OF CHALLENGING AND ENTERTAINING TARGETS.

## Red and Blue

The World English Sporting was shot over two days – 100 targets each day on Red and Blue Course. Both courses had a high level of difficulty for different reasons. Red course was the more open with some fast and long targets. There was a good mix of target types – with crossers, quartering away, teal, rabbits, incomers and loopers all mixed in to step up the level of difficulty. The 40 yard fast flat left to right crosser and 30 yard right to left slow flat crosser as a true pair on Stand 10 caused plenty of trouble. That was followed by a driven true pair (120-140ft) on Stand 11 that saw plenty of US shooters outside their comfort zone. If you finished your rotation on Red Stand 1 or 2 there was



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**ABOVE AND TOP LEFT: THE OPEN TERRAIN OF THE RED COURSE. TOP RIGHT: THE MORE CLOSED IN BLUE COURSE.**



low, fast and despite only being at 30-35 yards, were technically difficult. Add in to the mix the sun filtering through the tree canopy and some of the targets became difficult to pick up off the trap arm – the white targets on Stand 6 created untold problems. “What you can’t see, you can’t shoot,” said one Veteran shooter. Elsewhere on Blue there were some good open areas that allowed the target setter a little more creativity. Stand 15 included a 45 yard right to left looper followed by a top speed quartering away standard that was at 35 yards when you picked up on it. As one top US Master class said to me, “If you put targets on like this at a Big Blast in the US, most of the competitors would leave on day one!”

Even though the ‘open’ Red course and the ‘closed’ Blue course complemented each other nicely, both courses were considered relentlessly by US shooters. Scott Robertson summed it up. “For a 100 bird course back home we tend to have 6-8 easier stations, 3-4 tougher stations and a couple of stations that separate the men from the boys. Here, there were probably 2-3 easy stations, 7-8 tough stations and 3-4 stations of the highest level of difficulty. At the US Nationals, there would be plenty of competitors that would whine and complain if they saw targets like these – but that’s what UK shooters routinely shoot week in week out – that’s why they’re so good.”

Wendell Cherry told me, “You can’t fly in from the US and a day or two later do justice to targets like these. They need the utmost respect and your full focus. Reading the target line is really tough if you don’t regularly see targets like these. I’m lucky to have shot in Europe and the UK

more heartache – with a fast right to left crossing rabbit on Stand 1 followed on report by a zinging battue at 40 yards left to right. On Stand 2, there was a flat, going away trap target at 35 yards and a fast straight-away teal, as a true pair. The teal second shot (60 yards) was the issue – until I watched George Digweed shoot it. He opted for a slow steady shot at the going away trap target, followed by shooting the teal on the drop at 60-70 yards! Four pairs. Eight scored! Those in the following squads waiting their turn, spectators and onlookers could not help but put their hands together – it was impressive stuff.

The Blue course was very much different. Stands 4-12 were shot in and around the woodland to the rear of the shooting ground. These 8 stations offered a good mix of targets but they were all

#### KYLER FORD AND JUSTIN FOX.



many times, but even I had issues. Rabbits at 50-60 yards that need long leads, overhead targets, loopers that travel 150 yards across a high arc at 40 yds out and what look like 100mph teal are always going to be an issue for US shooters – we just don't see enough targets like these. They're an exciting challenge. I'd love to shoot targets like these in the US on a regular basis – but until we do, US competitors will find it difficult to compete at this standard."

Tom Mack was the top scoring US shooter on day one with the highest score (93) on Red. "I thoroughly enjoyed the course," said Mack. "I felt relaxed and was on my A game. Some of the presentations needed more lead than I initially thought and there

**"Some of the presentations needed more lead than I initially thought and there were one or two targets that were overly distant. Speed and angle was what you had to concentrate on."**

were one or two targets that were overly distant. Speed and angle were what you had to concentrate on."

So, if the US competitors found it tough going, what of the Europeans? Ben Husthwaite, who shot a steady 94 on both courses said, "I thought it was a good set of targets – tough for sure. But this is the World Championships and is the ultimate test of everyone's ability."

George Digweed agreed. "I shot Red course on Saturday and was pleased with my score of 92 – though I felt 93 or 94 was the pace. I shot Blue on Sunday, when news came in that one of our top UK-based shooters, Richard Bunning, had shot a 97 on Red on Sunday – that was phenomenal shooting. My 94 on Blue on Sunday was probably as good as it got, putting me into the Super Final with a total of 186. Both courses were tough – not helped by temperatures of 90° plus and excessive waiting times at each stand – the double squadding on each station favored by the CPSA and NSCA doesn't work. Delays caused by backups, one station after another, saps your energy and ruins your focus and concentration."

At the end of Saturday, Ben



**DOUBLE SQUADDING DOESN'T WORK WELL ON A TIGHT CLOSED IN COURSE.**

Husthwaite had the high score (94) on Blue. Highest placed US shooters on Blue were Mike Hafley and Scott Robertson on 89, ahead of Jimmy Warren (86), Byron Justice (85) and Gebben Miles (85). Tom Mack (93) flew the flag for the US on Saturday night on the Red course, while Scott Robertson was back on 89, Wendell Cherry was on 87 and young Jason Fox was on 86.

Sunday's second 100 targets didn't see much improvement on the leader board for US competitors. Tom Mack's 93 on Saturday was followed with an 84 on Blue on Sunday. Mike Hafley followed up his Blue 89 with a Red 85, Scott Robertson's 89 on Red was followed by a 90 on Blue and

Wendell Cherry's 87 on Blue was added to an 86 on Red. No American shooter made the top six for the Super Final.

Late Sunday the Super Final got underway. The top three of Ben Husthwaite (188), Paul Simpson (187) and George Digweed (186) all shot 14 ex 25 finishing unchanged at one, two, three on 202, 201 and 200 respectively. The other Super Final contenders included Martin Myers (183 + 15), Carl Bloxham (182 + 16) and Richard Brunning (182 + 16) for 1, 2, 3 in AAA class.

Sure, the targets were tough – made that much harder by an evening breeze that took several targets out to 60 yards! So, no success for the US Seniors – but

**HUNTER MILLIGAN.**



**ASHLEIGH HAFLEY.**



**SCOTT ROBERTSON.**



**KYLER FORD.**

## SHOOTREPORT

Diane Sorantino (156) won Ladies Bronze, Hunter Milligan (155) won Silver and Jenni Clark won Bronze in the Colts.

In the team events, America's Senior won Silver (857), three targets adrift of England (860); the American Ladies (457) and

American Juniors (505) both won Gold; the US Veterans (469) picked up Bronze behind England (473) and Wales (476) and the Super Veterans (436) won Silver, six

targets adrift of England.

Next up was the 2010 World FITASC Championship. As US competitors packed their bags and re-checked their guns at Heathrow

Airport for their trip to Italy for the World FITASC it was a case of crossed fingers that targets wouldn't be quite so demanding. ■

**GEORGE DIGWEED IN ACTION DURING THE SPORTING SUPER FINAL. AT RIGHT, BEN HUSTHWAITE, 2010 WORLD SPORTING CHAMPION.**



**DIANE SORANTINO – MEDALS GALORE.**

