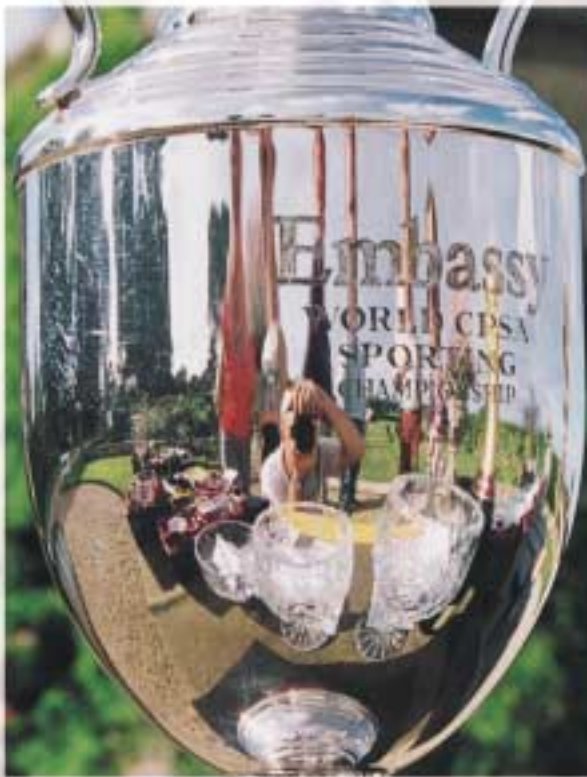


The Embassy World Sporting Championships, staged third weekend of August at Somerley House, in southern England, will probably be remembered with disappointment by most of the US team. With a Ladies individual bronze medal and a handful of silver medals in the team events, it was left to Sheldon Benge to take the only gold medal with an outstanding individual win to become the Embassy Junior World Champion.



TOP

PERFORMANCE

FROM SHELDON BENGE AT THE 2002 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS



The two 100 bird courses (Red and Blue) were shot on separate days in perfect shooting conditions. Blue course was over open and partly wooded parkland, while Red course was a more traditional sporting layout among rolling woodland. Targets for this prestigious competition had been set by Dave Peckham who – back

in July – had set many of the targets and layouts at the US Open. Across the two days the top scores on each course were in the 92 to 94 bracket – considered to be ‘about right’ for a World Championship.

General consensus among US competitors was that the targets were of top competition standard with nothing too rangy and very

little evidence of edge-on targets. On the face of it, everything was very hittable – but over 26 stations of the weekend it seemed to become a tall order.

There is no doubt that many of the sporting clay targets thrown in Europe are different to those in the USA. Over and above the mixture of slow and fast paced

WORLDCHAMPIONSHIPS

targets with twisting and turning angles, they also throw more report singles, making it difficult to shoot from a single stance position – a pre-mounted gun is often a disadvantage.

The more open layout of European courses enables the target setter to utilize traps with fully cranked up springs, throwing targets that travel anywhere from 100-200 yards across a shooting window of 50-80 yards. These wide open spaces make a long traveling 35 yard crosser or high looping battue more difficult in that there are now three, four or five different kill positions – and if you get it wrong you're not in the right position for the second target.

The degree of target difficulty at this Championship was constant across all stations. There was not a single 'gimmee' station and targets just seemed to slip away station after station with no respite.

Both Bobby Fowler and Scott Robertson were of the opinion that "it's getting tougher each year to compete with the best in Europe on their home ground." This is certainly no criticism of US shooter abilities – but more a recognition that the game is played 'tougher' overseas and US shooters seem not to be



SHELDON BENGÉ - THE 2002 EMBASSY JUNIOR WORLD CHAMPION



SILVER MEDALS FOR THE US LADIES



conditioned to these European target presentations.

In the team events the US picked up Silver medals behind England in the Seniors (817-857/1000), Ladies (427-473/600), Veterans (433-473/600) and Juniors (448-472/600). In the individual competition, no US senior made the 180/200 (90 per cent) cut-off to reach the 25 bird Super Final that was contested by nine top England competitors – with the honors as 2002 World Sporting Champion going to Richard Faulds with George Digweed one target behind as R/U. Top scoring US individual after the 200 bird main event was Scott Robertson on 174.

No US Veteran made the podium in the individual competition – while in the Ladies Casey Atkinson managed a Bronze medal with 154, nine behind Jo Marsh, the Ladies Champion. So the honor of the team was left to a Junior – Sheldon Bengé – who put his Browning Gold Auto and Lyalvale SuperComp shell combination to good effect to lift the only US Gold medal of the weekend and the World Junior title on 165 – one target ahead of Richard Effamy of England. It was a significant achievement for this young man and very much deserved.



RICHARD FAULDS –
2002 WORLD
SPORTING
CHAMPION

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SILVER MEDALS FOR THE JUNIOR TEAM (TOP), VETERANS (CENTRE) AND SENIORS (BOTTOM). AT LEFT, SCOTT ROBERTSON AND BILL MCGUIRE IN DEEP CONVERSATION BETWEEN STATIONS.