

CLASS ACT BUT WHAT CLASS?



THE SUPPORT AND WARM WELCOME FROM MANUFACTURERS AND COMPETITORS GIVEN TO OUR TEAM DURING THE LAUNCH OF ClayShootingUSA AT THE US OPEN LATE IN JULY WAS TRULY FANTASTIC!
MICHAEL BRUNTON PUBLISHER

The first ever US Open was held at Minnesota Horse & Hunt Club back in 1989 – won by Jon Kruger. History was to repeat itself in 2002!

This year's Open was a cracker-jack of an event and you'll find a full report in this issue. For us it was truly exciting to see and hear your reaction to ClayShootingUSA — shooters and manufacturers clearly appreciate the concept of a truly dedicated 'Sporting' title.

Your feedback on editorial content, what you'd like to see more of, has been invaluable.

With the combination of shoot reports, feature articles and our regular columns in this issue, you will find plenty to keep you interested, whatever class of shooter you are.

CLASSIFICATIONS

Talking of 'classes', the results from this year's Open have brought the subject of classification right back to the top of the agenda. Your

many e-mails suggesting that the results indicated that many shooters are wrongly classified is, in our opinion, wide of the mark. Yes, this was a testing set of 200 targets as befits a premiere event. At this level of difficulty and under the nerve-racking conditions of top competition, the results will always throw up inconsistencies in classification. For example: Of the thousand or so competitors listed on the final result sheet, 194 were classified in Masterclass — and yet 61 of them shot under 150 ex-200 (75%). The winner of AA would have been 31st of 194 in Masterclass. The last 40 competitors in Masterclass (145 ex-200 and below) would not have won AA, A, B, C, D or E class! So what deductions can be made from such results?

On the face of it, some people will inevitably point to their classification and claim it to be unrepresentative of their ability. However, the truth is that it is the shooter's ability that should be

examined, not the classification system. Outside of the Open, Nationals, and one or two other premiere Championships, the widely varying degree of target difficulty (or non-difficulty) from East to West Coast and from North to South among the thousands of registered shoots held each year has more to do with classification discrepancies than it does the system itself. If you're collecting punches – up the ladder you go. But where and what did you win? How many registered targets have you shot? If in the last year you've won or done well at poorly attended 'skeet in the woods' events and now find yourself in the top three classes, I can well understand the disappointment of some of you at your class performance at this year's Open which caused you to squeal "I'm in a class too high."

You can't have it both ways – seeking soft target classification at regional level all year and then shouting 'foul' when you come up against world-class targets.

On the face of it, the classification system would be perfect if the standard of 'sporting' targets was consistent across all registered shoots nation-wide – but that's a pipe dream. The hard fact is that competitive shooters who are 'class conscious' (a minority among so many that enjoy our sport) must be more discerning about the registered events they shoot. Exposure to tougher and a wider variety of targets will bring improvement to ability and will doubtless ensure realistic classification. Above all – you'll enjoy your sport more when your known ability is truly classified and recognised by your peers.