

THE UK-US MASTERS

FITASC AT IT'S BEST SAYS STEVE FISCHER

EVERY TIME I HEAR SOMEONE SAY "THE BOYS ARE BACK IN TOWN", IT USUALLY MEANS THAT ENGLAND'S DAVE PECKHAM AND SON JAMIE ARE SETTING TARGETS AT THE MINNESOTA HORSE AND HUNT CLUB AND IT'S TIME FOR THE ANNUAL UK-US MASTERS FITASC AND CHALLENGE CUP SPORTING TOURNAMENT.

Hailing from Great Britain, Dave and his family own and operate the Southdown Shooting Grounds just a short ride outside of London and has become well known for setting world class targets on both sides of the pond. Certainly an aid to the target setting team, the Minnesota Horse and Hunt Club has several hundred acres of beautiful terrain dotted with rolling hills, lakes and ponds, with a multitude of trees to give the boys endless selections of possible presentations to confound and baffle us shooters – and they seem to do just that each year without resorting to ridiculous distances, short windows, or excessive target speed. In fact, many of the targets looked deceptively easy, but with the emphasis on the word 'deceptively'.

There was more than one Parcour that looked straightforward, only to find that

Dave had neatly handed you small pieces of your posterior at the end of the layout! If I heard it once, I heard it a dozen times, "Geez, the targets sure looked easier than that!" It was the fine nuances that would get you to drop a target here or a target there – such as the subtle difference in speed between two of the targets in a report pair. A fast right to left shot, followed on report with a slow, floppy shot at about 30 or so yards would beg for lead that wasn't needed. Or, a crosser or incomer that would have an obstacle – such as a small bush or tree – just exactly where you wanted to break it! Then there's the boys' favorite – a long crosser high in the air that's a 90mm midi rather than a standard 108. Right off the bat it appears to be much farther away than it actually is – and a miss in front is a sure bet! Damn, they're good!

This year's layouts were new style and most were set over virgin ground. Those layouts that were on previously used ground were completely different to earlier events.

If there was any problem at all with this shoot, it was from the format of the Main Event. It was tiring – 75 FITASC targets each day followed by the 100 sporting in the afternoon. After each FITASC Parcour there was about an hour of down time and then another two hours, roughly, to shoot the Challenge Cup 100 sporting targets – with lunch stuck in-between or skipped altogether. Randy Travalia, the Club Manager, agreed that a change might be a good idea for next year's event, to make it less grueling – perhaps only two FITASC Parcours per day and 50 sporting, spread over four days or maybe splitting the sporting into a three day format like the



FITASC and shoot 66, 66, 68 targets for a total of 200, while still shooting the FITASC with three Parcour per day and two Parcour on the third day. I am sure that this will be worked out to everyone's satisfaction for next year's shoot.

PRE-LIM WARM UP

Without fear of contradiction, there were enough targets for even the most dedicated shooter! In sporting, there were 400 targets presented – with a 100 target Pre-lim on both Thursday and Friday to go with the 200 targets of the Challenge Cup over Saturday and Sunday. And of course, there were the 200 FITASC targets interspersed with the sporting targets and spread over Friday through Sunday. Toss in the 5-Stand for warm-up and the Make-A-Break for good measure and one could shoot yourself into a stupor. I actually heard Junior shooter Brandon Powell, (who usually takes up temporary residence on the Make-A-Break stand at tournaments) say he had shot enough by Saturday! Even so, he won the Thursday Pre-lim on 94, the Challenge Cup (tied with Will Fennell at 179, but winning the shoot-off) and took the Bronze with a fine score of 176 just four targets off HOA in the FITASC event. Some pretty strong shooting from a 17 year old Junior!

Just over 50 shooters ventured out on the Thursday Pre-lim course, and frankly speaking, most were a bit disappointed with the presentations as the course was set with pretty soft league targets – and the scores reflected the fact. However, whatever excitement that was lacking in the Thursday Pre-lim was soon to be forgotten over the presentations of the Friday Pre-lim. But first, the Thursday scores. After Brandon Powell's HOA 94, Master first through third were Steve Fischer (94), Mike

Haas (94) and Robert Haynes (93). AA class was won by Dave Wolf, proud poppa of Gregg Wolf, on 94. A class winner was Dave Londeen (90) and B class winner was Allen Murphy (86). C class top gun was Todd Lambertus (83) with D class going to Scott Higley (80) and E class to Mary Johnson (70).

FRIDAY'S PRE-LIM

Friday came with clear skies, balmy temperatures, no wind and lots of excitement! The first 75 of the scheduled 200 FITASC event began. Most shooters had a morning start at FITASC, so the sporting Pre-lim would be on for the afternoon. The morning starters would finish three FITASC layouts by about noon, and with a break for lunch, those who hadn't had enough great targets would find a big change in the target difficulty level of the sporting Pre-lim over the previous day's targets. Friday's targets had a bit more zip on them with some testy crossers and teals, and were at a level about 5 or 6 targets

tougher than the Thursday Pre-lim.

Apparently, no one told Cory Kruse and Gregg Wolf that the sporting Pre-lim was tough, so they promptly put up a pair of 95s! Cory came out the HOA with Gregg Master first. Mike Haas and Tom Ruck completed the top three Masters (tied at 92). AA was won by Dennis Eichers with a tie of 81 with Curt Mauldin. Third spot was taken by the 79 of Dave Robohm. The A class race was a tough one with Gary Hand shooting an excellent score of 89 with Tom Hergert and Nathan Peterson second and third, tied at 85. B class first with an 84 was Chris Hyams, followed by Lester Zwach (80) and Craig Pace (79) third. William Doble tied with Michael Kohout at 76 for first and second in C class, and Darryl Doble placed third with 75. D class first place went to John Imboden (78) with Jeff Carleton second on 76, one up on third placed Warren Collier. The 75 shot by Luke Lukanen was good for first E with Dave Johnson second (69) and Win Mitchel third (64).

THE FITASC BEGINS

The competitors for Friday FITASC targets started on one of the A, B, C or D layouts, rotating in order for three Parcour. Dusty Loberg left the last Parcour with a posted 71 out of 75 and the only 25 straight on Parcour A, showing everyone that he'd come to play! Will Fennell, Cory Kruse, Brandon Powell, Craig Hill and a couple of others were close behind in the mid to high 60s and it was anyone's guess at that point as to which of them would top the leader board on day three. The scores reflected the fact that Parcour B was the hardest of the four layouts, by at least two targets.

THE SECOND 75 AND THE FIRST 100

Saturday began as another day in paradise. The weather couldn't be better and the temperature was still in the perfect column. Parcour A through D would change mid-day to Parcour E through H, with completely different presentation





LEFT TO RIGHT: DAVE PECKHAM, DUSTY LOBERG, WILL FENNELL AND JAMIE PECKHAM.



BRANDON POWELL WAS IN TOP FORM ALL WEEKEND.



FITASC VETERAN HOA JIM NOEL (162) BEAT STEVE FISCHER FOR THE HONORS.

and more challenge and distance than the previous day. The average scores would feel the pinch of a couple of less targets on Saturday, although the top guns were still cranking out 22s, 23s and 24s.

At the completion of Saturday's three Parcours, those who had

signed up for the 200 target Challenge Cup Sporting would grab a quick lunch and head out to the 12 station course. Will Fennell topped the sporting that first day with a fine score of 92, a full five targets ahead of Brandon Powell, (87), which was five targets ahead

of Dusty Loberg's 82. It seemed that everyone struggled on the first 100 sporting. At day's end, the scores were still not giving away any clues as to a front runner with a further 100 targets still to be shot on Sunday.

SUNDAY, AND LAST CHANCE TO BE A FITASC STAR!

Again, we were graced with another beautiful day and balmy temperatures. Everyone had their game faces on and were ready to take on today's dose of Peckham's targets. Will Fennell, Dusty Loberg and Brandon Powell were looking pretty good on the score board, but you couldn't quite count out Gregg Wolf, Cory Kruse, or recent addition to Team USA FITASC Craig Hill. When the first results came in, Will Fennell had stayed tough and so had Dusty Loberg, with a dead heat pair of 180s. Brandon Powell would just fall short at 176 for

RU-2. A shoot-off between Will and Dusty put the Gold on Will and the Silver on Dusty. Gregg Wolf and Craig Hill finished first and second in their class with their 174 tie and Cory Kruse took third with 173. This group of shooters finished a full 16 targets ahead of the top AA score – substantiating the superb skills of these shooters!

AA top gun Dave Robohm shot a fine 157 followed by Dave Wolf (154) with third going to Jason Cranmer (151). A class was won by Tom Klimek, tied on 151 with second placed John Marsh. Gary Hand took home the third place honors. B class winner Chris Hyames shot a 154, second went to Allen Murphy (146) with Lester Zwach third (143). C class was won by Gary Rainey (145) with John Gunn one up on third placed Frank Alfaro (133). Bruce Glawe took the honors in D class with a 120 tie with John Imboden and Jean duPont Blair captured third with a 112. E class was won by Jim Schmitz with a 103, followed by Karl Wampler (65).

W. Ray Newman again showed his stuff by winning HOA in Super-Veterans with 146 and Meylert Armstrong was Runner-up on 130 with Gus McFaddin third (126). The Veteran HOA was Jim Noel at 162 followed by Steve Fischer (158) and Curtis Anderson (157). The Ladies found Michelle Krier and Paula Benbow finishing their tie at 117 in that order, with Jean duPont Blair third (112). The Juniors, as usual, are a scary bunch with shooting skills only found on the planet Krypton! Brandon Powell found his 176 good for HOA Junior, Gregg Wolf took second (174) while Cory Kruse took third with 173.

THE FINAL CHALLENGE CUP SCORES

Brandon Powell and Will Fennell



shot identical scores, but on opposite days. They tied at 179, and after a shoot-off, Brandon would be the HOA with Fennell RU and Steve Korin third. The targets presented for the Challenge Cup Sporting were every bit as good as the FITASC targets and demanded your best game if you were to score well.

Master Class one to three was Cory Kruse (169), Craig Hill (169) and Nadim Nasir (166). John Mohler won AA class with 156 and Curt Mauldin was second on 153. Third place went to Jason Cranmer (151). A class was won by Gary Hand (154) with Nathan Peterson second (152) and James Warren third (150). B class winner Allen Murphy shot a fine 151 with Tom Spence second (142) and Craig Pace third (139). C class was won by Sean Stapleton (142) followed closely by Jeff Wiemann (141) and Todd Lamburtus third (140). D class honors went to Warren Collier with John Imboden second (128) and Doug Heidinger third (117). E class was won by Dave Johnson (124) with second going to Dave Brewer (119) and John Goedel taking third at 114.

Gus McFaddin was the top gun in the Super-Veterans (133) and the Veteran winner was John Mohler (156). The Juniors Concurrent was won by Nick Gamel (156) and the Lady Concurrent was won by Paula Benbow (125).

This year's UK-US Masters provided three days of superb targets, weather and entertainment. We couldn't have wished for better conditions nor could we have hoped for better targets. It was truly a pleasure to shoot and should be somewhere near the top of your list of tournaments that you don't want to miss next year. ■