



2005 UK US MASTERS

DUSTY LOBERG, BACK IN COMPETITION ONCE AGAIN, AT STATION 14.



SUMMER FLOWERS IN FULL BLOOM SURROUND THE CLUBHOUSE AND GROUNDS.

TARGETS WITH AN ENGLISH
'FLAVOR', AND MINNESOTA
HOSPITALITY! REPORT BY
STEVE FISCHER

For the third year in a row the Minnesota Horse and Hunt Club, under the direction of Randy Travalia, hosted the UK US Masters FITASC and Challenge Cup Sporting Clays Tournament. Dave Peckham's 200 FITASC and 200 sporting targets complemented the lush greenery over a terrain of hills, corn fields, lakes and woods.

His presentations do more than

just fly in a straight line from point A to point B – a little hook here, a dip there, or perhaps his signature target of a long, high, rolling chandelle type target that might be a battue, a standard, or even a rabbit! A battue might just give you a good look and then begin to bend away, off in another direction, forcing the shooter to take his shot not where he wants to, but where

Mr. Peckham wants him to!

Perhaps this was why over 100 of the 150 plus competitors were from AA class and higher – all were looking forward to a challenge to their abilities. Not all the shots were super long or super fast – but they did raise the test level of the shooter's ability up a notch or two. Still, the entertainment value of these targets was first rate and a lot of fun, without beating up the middle classes.

MHHC's terrain allows for presentations over water, up and down hills, across acres of corn and other crops, and just about every type of shot you could imagine was presented. On several of the layouts clear cuts removed overgrown plant life and provided the shooter with some breath taking views of the lake and surrounding wetlands. Many of the

machines were hidden from view, or could just barely be seen peeking out from a tree or bush, adding to the realism.

The weather blessed us every day with warm temperatures, clear skies and no rain! A rather hefty breeze came calling on Saturday and again on Sunday, which kept the heat down, but did affect the flight of several targets.

As shooting facilities go, the MHHC rates right at the top, with full service and amenities, and is just a short 25 minute ride from the Minneapolis/St. Paul airport. With two complete regular sporting courses (and room for many others if needed), the club also has trap and skeet, 5-stand and league shooting year around with over 700 members! Also a game and hunt preserve, they offer pheasant hunting with lodging accommodations right on the property – as well as excellent dining at Triggers – their on-site restaurant and bar.

THE PRE-LIM

Targets were set to give the shooter a taste of things ahead. With 200 sporting targets for the Challenge Cup and 200 FITASC targets to come, the message was clear – you'd better have your game well in hand.

Dr. Nadim Nasir Jr. led the field, posting an excellent score of 93 for HOA. In the concurrents, honors went to Diane Sorantino (L-89), Gregg Wolf (J-90) and Ed Couture (SV-88). I managed to hang on for a win in Veterans with an 82 and Taylor Duhon topped Sub-Junior with 64.

JACK AND COKE!

Jack Daniels and Coca Cola were two of the sponsors and also two of the FITASC Parcours. The other major sponsors included Promatic,



LADY CHAMPION DIANE SORANTINO TOPPED THE PRE-LIM, SPORTING, AND FITASC EVENTS IN THE LADIES CONCURRENTS.

ALL THE CONCURRENT WINNERS: BACK ROW LEFT TO RIGHT: GREGG WOLF, GEBBEN MILES, LARRY FARROW, RON SHAFER, ED COUTURE. FRONT ROW LEFT TO RIGHT: STEVE FISCHER, DIANE SORANTINO, AND PATTIE MASTROIANNI.



TOM RUCK, THE FITASC CHAMPION, WITH A SMILE ALMOST AS BIG AS THE TROPHY!

completed the same day! 175 serious targets had to be shot on Saturday, with 150 on the Sunday menu. Heat and fatigue, I'm sure, had at least a small influence on the scores – as well as the gusting breeze. Nevertheless, some pretty good scores were posted in both events.

Saturday night MHHC brought out a delicious banquet spread, prepared by the chef of Trigger's restaurant – pork roast and beef, with baked potatoes, or potato salad, assorted veggies and salad bar, two drink tokens and dessert, all capped off with steaming hot coffee or perhaps an after dinner drink. Especially nice was the fact that we all enjoyed the air conditioned comfort indoors for the banquet! It was, without fear of contradiction, an excellent meal, and those who opted to eat out missed a fine banquet!

RED AND BLUE

While the FITASC got under way Friday, continuing all weekend, the Challenge Cup started on Saturday

and was to be shot in between, before or after the days FITASC layouts. Even after looking at the course scores side by side, it was difficult to assess which of the two courses was the most difficult. Both included some tricky crossers and some pretty interesting longer shots. Although there were no true driven-style shots, there were a couple of long incomers that had just a bit of angle on them – enough to damage many a good scorecard.

The top score on the Red course was posted by Dusty Loberg (90) and then again on the Blue course (89) giving him HOA with 179. John Woolley and Craig Hill took second and third, tied at 171. Andy Duffy's 170 was good for first Master followed by Brian Duquesnay (167) and Gary Fitzjarrell (166).

In the Ladies concurrent, Diane Sorantino was having a great weekend, taking the top position with a matched pair of 81's for a 162 total. Second place went to DeeAnn Massey (138) and Paula Moore (137) was just one back for third place.

Taylor Duhon, the only Sub-Junior, shot an excellent 120. Gebben Miles posted 165 for top spot in the Juniors. Also on a roll

this weekend, I won Veteran's (163). Super-Veteran, Ed Couture, posted 159 with W. Ray Newman in second place (148) followed home by Gus McFaddin (143).

DOWN TO THE WIRE

As usual you could not make a solid prediction as to who the FITASC top gun would be, but when the last shots were heard, Tom Ruck and Dusty Loberg would find themselves tied at 183. The shoot-off put Ruck in at HOA with Loberg Runner-up. Will Fennell and Dr. Nadim Nasir also shot off for third, tied at 180, with Fennell taking the third spot and Nadim graduating to first Master. Gary Fitzjarrell (178) was second Master, with Rick Grace (176) third.

It was a clean sweep for Diane Sorantino, winning the Pre-lim, sporting and now the FITASC with a fine score of 167. Patti Mastroianni (157) was second. Junior Champion went to Gebben Miles (175) with Gregg Wolf (169) in second. Super-Veteran Ron Shafer found them looking big and slow, posting a victory score of 165, well ahead of Ed Couture's 154. In the Veterans, I too had a hot weekend, sweeping the Veterans concurrent in the Pre-lim, sporting and the FITASC, posting a puffy 172, with second place going to Larry Farrow's 158.

The Minnesota Horse and Hunt Club truly did an exceptional job of hosting and running the multiple events of the UK US Masters. If one were to find fault in any area of



JIM EVELYN LINING UP A FAST DOWN HILL RABBIT.

this excellent tournament it would have to be the lack of sufficient signage directing the shooters to the Parours and to the sporting stations. Printed menus on the sporting stands would also be helpful for the shooters and score keepers alike. Not a major problem

mind you – but one that I am sure will be addressed for next year's tournament. Otherwise, the unrivaled hospitality of the ground, and Minnesota in general, make both an excellent choice for a visit or a vacation – maybe even another hosting of a US Open! ■