

THE 2006 WORLD FITASC CHAMPIONSHIP

REPORT BY **STEVE FISCHER**

Minnesota Horse and Hunt Club was the venue in late July and 573 shooters came together to decide who would hold the title of World FITASC Champion for the next 12 months. Shooters from as far away as Australia, New Zealand and Russia were in attendance with 13 countries entered in team events.

Beside the Main Event of 200 FITASC targets to be shot over eight Parcours, there were two other side events – the 200 target Challenge Cup and a 100 target Compak sporting event. Practice Parcours were plentiful, and several games – including the ever popular Make-A-Break – were set along the front of the main clubhouse for easy access and viewing by spectators.

Minnesota is not generally known for extreme heat in the summer months – it's usually quite comfortable with temperatures in the 70s and low 80s. On this occasion a hot spell visited Minnesota right on top of this event, bringing with it high humidity and temperatures of up to 100°. Even the most ardent competitor would find it exhausting to compete under such extreme heat conditions. If there was any relief at all, it went to those who were lucky enough to draw an early a.m. rotation and only had to withstand temperatures in the high 80s. Shade was in short supply.

A secondary problem arose out of the dry, intense heat. Dust was everywhere on the dirt roadways

WHEW! WHERE DO I BEGIN THIS REPORT – THE HEAT? THE TARGETS? THE SHOOTERS?

THIS YEAR'S FITASC WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WAS A MYRIAD OF EXCITEMENT, DISAPPOINTMENT, EXTREME HEAT, LOGISTIC PROBLEMS, AS WELL AS ONE OF GREAT COMPETITION, RENEWAL OF FRIENDSHIPS TO VISITING OVERSEAS FRIENDS AND CULMINATED IN ONE OF THE CLOSEST RACES FOR THE TITLE OF WORLD CHAMPION – EVENTUALLY WON IN A SHOOT-OFF BY ENGLAND'S BEN HUSTHWAITE.



**BEN HUSTHWAITTE,
WITH THE SALUTE OF A
WORLD CHAMPION!**

that led to and from the events, kicked up by the general traffic and golf carts.

DAY ONE

Thursday saw the start of the FITASC Championship as well as the Challenge Cup Sporting and the Compak event. An early decision had been made, either by

choosing to conserve their strength and energy for the FITASC Championship.

Meetings were held Thursday evening that resulted in new squadding times for everyone with more time allotted for each squad to shoot and move to the next peg. Waiting areas were moved closer to the pegs to help speed things up, more or less side-stepping the

tradition of not being able to view the targets while others were shooting. The improvement was noticeable almost immediately. Squads began to move more quickly and delays, if any, were less than 10 minutes in most instances.

MHH's excellent terrain of rolling hills and its vast size became a two-edged sword for many who



**ONE OF THE MANY
BEAUTIFUL PARCOURS.**



or in consultation with FITASC officials, to shut down four of the eight Parcours in the Main Event. This decision was made, most likely, because of the far lower than expected attendance. However, attempting to run 100 squads through the four remaining Parcours at a pace of 11 minutes per squad became a problem. By early afternoon, the backup was about two hours and by the evening, even longer, resulting in some shooters competing at the edge of darkness.

The snowball effect of these delays also caused many shooters to back out of one or both of the Sporting and Compak, having missed their start times. Some shooters opted out of these side events because of the heat,

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were walking. Layouts were quite a distance from the clubhouse and parking areas. Shuttles were available, but distances between pegs would often be a couple of hundred yards or more and the excessive heat made these long walks taxing. Even the heartiest of walkers were quick to accept an offered ride by someone with a golf cart! However, the terrain did give back some excellent layouts over some breathtaking views of the countryside.

DAY TWO

The first four Parcours, shot two per day over Thursday and Friday, were named after their respective sponsors – Beretta, Browning, ClayShootingUSA and Promatic,



ONLY 215 COMPETITORS TOOK PART IN THE COMPAK.

with Saturday and Sunday's four layouts named Briley, Krieghoff, Blaser and Hull.

As the early squad results from the first two days were posted, it became evident that the first four Parcours were leaning to the softer side of the spectrum. Of the top ten shooters, their scores for the first four layouts had thirteen 25 straights and fifteen 24s. Young

Brett Winstanley, a Junior from the UK, posted three 25 straights and a 23 for a 98 score, tied with British shooter Ben Hushwaite and one more than the defending World champion, George Digweed's 97.

The second four layouts shot over Saturday and Sunday showed markedly more difficult presentations with only four 25 straights and nine 24s. High

scoring aside, the targets demanded respect, were entertaining and required the highest levels of concentration. But, as we have come to expect from some of the top FITASC aficionados, there were those that expressed the view that targets were "softer than one would have expected for this caliber of this event."

IN THE MEANTIME...

Those who had not opted out or missed their start times were busy shooting the Challenge Cup event and or the Compak. The Challenge Cup targets were set over three courses of 66-66-68=200 with 335 shooters competing over the Red, White and Blue courses that were shot one per day from Thursday through Saturday.

The Red course seemed to be the most difficult and also had the best variety of targets. The Blue was a yawner of about 60 quartering shots in the woods, with some complaints of difficulty in seeing the targets as they darted along the edges of tree lines. The White course fell somewhere in between the Red and Blue as far as difficulty was concerned. Bill McGuire, still on one heck of a roll which started at the Triple Classic this spring, took HOA after a tie





JOE CANTEY CELEBRATES WITH THE LADIES!



MAKE-A-BREAK WAS BUSY THROUGHOUT.

with Bobby Fowler Jr at 189 ex-200. Ben Husthwaite was the second Runner-up at 187. Master 1st went to Scott Robertson (184), tied with Cory Kruse in Master 2nd.

In the concurrents, honors went to Justin Fox (SJ-174), Greg Jackson (J-178), Ron Shafer (SV-164), Jim Jamison (V-167) and Linda Joy (L-157).

OFF TO THE COMPAK!

As an observation, I would have to say that Compak Sporting seems to be on some pretty shaky ground here in the States. Its chances for a healthy survival over the tried and true 5-Stand event we all know and kinda love seems to be growing slimmer by the event. Only 215 shooters took part, including just 12 international shooters.

Nevertheless, the targets were good, with a mix of presentations instead of the usual fare of all true pairs that seems to be dominating many of these Compak events at other shoots around the country. The four layouts alternated between report pairs and true pairs

– presentations were tricky and fun. Of the international competitors, Hugh Burns topped the field shooting a fine 82 for HOA, followed by Adrien Van Tilburg one back at 81. In the Open seniors, Matt Treece took HOA with 93, followed by Dr. Nadim Nasir (92) and Joey Bolton (92) in third place, squeaking by both Wendell Cherry and Will Fennell.

DOWN TO THE WIRE!

After a difficult start on Thursday, things settled down and the Main Event flowed well. Scores were close, making it a guessing game of who might win the prestigious World title. With squads still venturing out late in the afternoon on Sunday, shoot-offs would not be until the early evening and multiple ties were expected. As it turned

out, three of the finest shooters in the World would end up tied at the truly amazing score of 191, along with two Junior shooters, Hub Johnson, and France's Bastien Havart, tied at 186 for the Junior title.

The stage was set and the targets were tweaked on the Make-A-Break stand, located conveniently below the large rolling hill that borders the



US SENIOR TEAM GOLD.



clubhouse, giving spectators a birds-eye view of this exciting finish.

The senior shoot-off was between George Digweed, 14 times World Champion, fellow Englishman Ben Husthwaite – who had been at his heels more often than not at most of those wins – and Anthony Matarese Jr. who has won just about every type and level of event ever set in the US. You couldn't have mail ordered in a more exciting finish to this World Championship. The targets were set far tougher than just about every other target shot during the event, and as they progressed through the first of three pegs, it was quite clear that no one was particularly intimidated by the long and fast targets presented.

A particularly fast and long crosser came in from the left of the shooters at about 50 yards, and a super fast high teal from about 30 yards and going straight up would be the 'gimmie' target. A high rolling chandelle from right to left traveled out into the tall grass that bordered the lake and got a considerable distance in a very short period of time. Then there was a low and very fast crosser from right to left at around 40 yards that was truly the toughest shot on the layout – and would prove to be the spoiler target.

The Junior shoot-off was won by Hub Johnson, taking home the title of 2006 Junior Champion, with Bastien Havart in second. Brett Winstanley's stand alone score of 183 took third place Junior.

Meanwhile, the three senior shooters were neck and neck, all the way to the third peg, where the already tough presentations just got tougher and longer. Both

Ben and George were down a single target each and Anthony was down two. George finally slipped up on a crosser, giving Ben a slim opening. The excitement went to fever pitch level as Ben worked his way through the pairs – and when his last shot center punched the last target he had finally achieved his long-time ambition – 2006 World FITASC Champion!

After a short miss and out, Digweed would place second and Anthony Matarese Jr. third. This was about as exciting as it can get, and will certainly go down in history as one of the best shoot-offs to ever decide such a prestigious championship.

In the team events, the US cleaned up – winning Senior Gold (Craig Hill, Rick Camuglia, Wendell Cherry and Anthony Matarese Jr), Ladies Gold (Susan Wall, Diane Nelson and Diane Sorantino), Junior Gold (Joey Bolton, Sean Kohout and Matt Treece), Veteran Silver (Joe



LEFT: LINDA JOY COMES OUT OF RETIREMENT TO BECOME LADIES CHAMPION. CENTER: AJ SMITH WINS THE VETERANS. BELOW: JUNIOR GOLD FOR USA.



WORLD FITASC

CH	BEN HUSTHWAITE	191
2ND	GEORGE DIGWEED	191
3RD	ANTHONY MATARESE JR	191
L1	LINDA JOY	173
L2	DIANE SORANTINO	173
L3	INNA ALEKSANDROVA	172
J1	HUB JOHNSON	186
J2	BASTIEN HAVART	186
J3	BRETT WINSTANLEY	183
V1	AJ SMITH	181
V2	STEVE WOODLEY	181
V3	NEVILLE JAY	176
SV1	GUS McFADDIN	166
SV2	ED COUTURE	164
SV3	DAVE PAYNE	162

CHALLENGE CUP

CH	BILL MCGUIRE	189
2ND	BOBBY FOWLER JR	189
3RD	BEN HUSTHWAITE	187
M1	SCOTT ROBERTSON	184
AA1	NATHAN NIEMANN	165
A1	PRINT R. ZUTAVERN	164
B1	DR HUGH BOYES	155
C1	MIKE TREECE	163
D1	ROBERTO SCACCIA	162
E1	MARTI MARACHE	142
SJ1	JUSTIN FOX	174
J1	GREG JACKSON	178
L1	LINDA JOY	157
V1	JAMES JAMISON	167
SV1	RON SHAFER	164

COMPAK

CH	MATT TREECE	93
2ND	NADIM NASIR	92
3RD	JOEY BOLTON	92
M1	WENDELL CHERRY	92
AA1	PETE MELLOY	86
A1	DANNY WINSTANLEY	87
B1	DR HUGH BOYES	80
C1	JOHN PAESSLER	67
D1	ROSS MUNRO	76
E1	MARTI MARACHE	54
SJ1	DANNY WINSTANLEY	87
J1	MATT TREECE	93
L1	STEFANIE STEINKRAUS	77
V1	STEVE FISCHER	85
SV1	ARNOLD MULKEY	85

Cantey, Steve Fischer and Curtis Anderson) and Super Veteran Gold (Ron Shafer, W. Ray Newman and Ed Couture).

ALL OVER

The majority of shooters had a great time – they enjoyed the facilities and grounds, the hospitality, the excellent food in Triggers restaurant and lounge

**DAD – I WON!**

and the event as a whole. Randy Travalia, his team and Minnesota Horse & Hunt Club did a great job. Granted, there were a few problems early on, but they were quickly addressed.

One could speculate about the lower than expected turnout, and there were certainly some very notable shooters not on the list of competitors – from both sides of the pond. The exchange rate was certainly favorable for those who carry both Sterling and Euros in their pockets. Some overseas competitors mentioned the reprehensible 'Form 6' required by our government for foreign visitors to get their guns into the country – the wait of about six weeks and the red tape involved is sure to have discouraged quite a few travelers to our shores. I would also expect that the high costs of gasoline and hotels discouraged a few US shooters as well.

Even so, a new FITASC World Champion joined the roll of honor – and those wanting to take Ben Husthwaite's crown must now wait another year. Well done Ben! ■