



THE NORTH AMERICAN **FITASC** CHAMPIONSHIP

STEVE FISCHER REPORTS FROM NORTHBROOK SPORTS CLUB

In the past few years travel has become, at the very least, an adventure – especially by air. My flight from Miami to Chicago for the North American FITASC Championship arrived over two hours late because of the vagaries of the weather. But even the trials and tribulations of air travel couldn't put a dampener on my anticipation of shooting again at Northbrook Sports Club. They hosted this prestigious event and promised true championship targets commensurate for a tournament of this stature. It was the second of only two World Cup tournaments held in the U.S. this year, taking the place of the Pan American World FITASC.

A short 40 minutes north of the "Windy City" and the cacophony of noise that shrouds Chicago like a blanket, Northbrook resides in the peaceful quiet of the countryside with rolling hills, lakes and farms

in the Grayslake/Libertyville area of Illinois. It has some tasty terrain that just invites the imagination and skills of target setters to challenge (as well as entertain) the shooters – utilizing hills, berms and woodlands for their presentations. This event called upon the skills of Jon Kruger and resident Manager Richie Fresella Jr. to set 200 memorable FITASC targets over eight Parcours, as well as 200 sporting targets, a 100 Friday Pre-lim and a competition 5-Stand layout.

Day One

As is typical in a 200 target FITASC event, the shooters would compete over three days, shooting three Parcours on day one and two, and would finish the remaining two Parcours on the third day. The 200 target sporting event would be

shot 100 per day either before or after shooting the daily FITASC.

My squad consisted of some pretty 'heavy hitters' and I had the pleasure of watching some amazing shooting by Gregg Wolf (a previous World FITASC Champion), along with Curtis Mauldin (known in some circles as the "great Mauldini"), Tom Ruck, Dave Wolf, and the Club Director and "go to" guy for just about anything involving the operation of the tournament, Brett Siebert. We started out on Parcour 4 amidst the clouds that thankfully decided not to rain on the shooters – although they threatened on and off all day.

This layout was unique in that it was set with the shooting pegs located along the top of a 40 foot high berm, directly across from another berm some 35 yards away. What made this Parcour unusual was a neat presentation of opposing rabbits. There was a fast rabbit going left to right, traveling about 20 yards along the top of the berm directly across from the shooting peg, which would then roll down a 45 degree angled dip at the end of the berm, with enough juice left to roll up the other side of the next berm! On the third peg of this layout, the pairs featured a rabbit from the left and then a rabbit from the right on report – quite fun and very innovative.

Parcour 5 gave us some long crossing shots and some beneath

your feet targets as we were positioned on the top of the berm, shooting into some beautiful rolling hills just below us. Parcour 6 was very entertaining – we shot one station from the second story of a beautiful three tiered wooden stand. A machine was positioned on the third floor throwing a fast and long overhead shot that got even more challenging when we got down on the ground for the second and third peg. Also presented was a seriously long right to left rabbit. I estimated the distance to be between 45 and 50 yards. Shooting down hill at this fast rabbit gave the visual impression that it was even farther away.

After three layouts, 4, 5 and 6, it was clear that the targets presented were true tournament quality – with plenty of speed, distance and difficulty to satisfy even the most devout FITASC connoisseur. As the days scores were posted, Wolf's 69 topped the score board, with Lieske just behind at 68 and Fennell, McGuire and Mauldin all tied up at 66. Veteran Lewis McMurrin was in with a 64 while Super Veteran Floyd Hartlage topped that concurrent with 59. Junior Abel Spire (62) was on top in his concurrent and Bev Cole (51) atop the Lady concurrent.

Day Two

Grey clouds and threatening weather persisted into Saturday morning, but as luck would have it, rain once again held off for the next three Parcours and the first one hundred sporting targets. Richie Fresella Jr. was the course setter for the sporting targets and they were in a word, challenging – just as promised. Lots of true crossers with speed and distance, as well as long teal and even longer chondelles. As a suggestion, a few less true pairs (some of which would also have been better as reports) in short windows would

have been preferred. Only eight shooters managed to break the 90 mark – and Lieske's 97 was a truly spectacular display of shooting skill. Doctor Paula Benbow topped the Ladies for day one with 82, while Randy Travalia in the Veterans also shot an 82. Super-Veteran Hartlage, having a great season, hammered the field with a 92 and Mike Everson's 90 capped the Juniors. It would be a real battle on day two of the Sporting event.

My squad shot Parcours 7, 8 and 1 next. Parcour 7 was a nice layout to start on – it was pretty user friendly. Both Wolf and Mauldin posted 25 straights, something that would prove to be a rarity. Parcour 8 was nicknamed "Mister Twister" as peg three featured a report pair that presented a rising teal from left to right and a going away trap shot dead opposite from right to left. You could either coil up and shoot the left teal and then unwind quickly to attempt the 180 degree opposite trap shot, or literally jump around to better square off for the second target. Tough, but fun!

Parcour 1 proved to be one of the toughest layouts in the tournament, at least for me,



TOP: DAVE LAUZEN DEEP IN THOUGHT.
LEFT: SUE ANN LAUZEN.
BELOW: JUNIOR SHOOTER, ABEL SPIRE.

RON SHAFER AT WORK ON PARCOUR 5.



primarily because of a very high crosser from a scissors lift, going right to left at mach one! If, and it was a big if, you could nail that crosser, you could put up a presentable score. If not, well then it could be tough on the score card as many were to discover – including myself.

The end of day two began to set the scene for projecting a winner, or at least, those who had a real chance at topping the score board after the last two Parcours on Sunday. Mauldin and Wolf were tied at 138, with Lieske, Fennell and McGuire close behind by just a couple of targets. Each of these top guns knew they had to bring their 'A' game to the table for the last two Parcours if they were going to take home HOA.

Down to the wire

Sunday morning brought bright clear skies, making for a near perfect shooting day. With but two Parcours to go, those who were in the hunt for the top spot knew that every shot counted. With scores

TOP: NORTHBROOK'S NEW TOWER ON PARCOUR 6 PROVIDED BOTH OVERHEAD AND BENEATH YOUR FEET TARGETS. BOTTOM: STEFANIE STEINKRAUS WORKS ON HER EVENTUAL LADY CHAMPION AWARD AS HUBBY PHIL WATCHES.



so close, maintaining focus and performing with as few mechanical errors as possible would produce the winning score.

Even with a four shot deficit, Lieske managed to come from behind and post an excellent score of 177 to take the 2009 North American FITASC Championship. Runner-up by but one target, Wolf's 176 was a fine effort. Fennell's 174 topped Master class and McGuire and Mauldin's tied score of 172 placed them second and third in Masters. The top Veteran award went to McMurrin (162) with Stephen Johnston (154) taking the silver spot and Dave Lauzen (153) taking bronze. Ladies gold went to Stefanie Steinkraus (135) with Beverly Cole (112) in silver and bronze for Dr. Paula Benbow (120). The Super-Veteran honors went to Bob Davis (155). Hartlage (153) was second and Mike Taylor (150) third. It was a tight race in the Junior concurrent with Spire and Sean Kohout taking first and second after shooting-off a 157 tie. Third spot went to Jacob Pennell (147).

Sporting Winners

The North American Cup sporting event was, without doubt, a very challenging and tricky 200 targets – especially the first 100 targets on Saturday – making Lieske's first day score of 97 even that much more



TOP: NORTHBROOK WENT ALL OUT WITH PROVIDING THESE BEAUTIFUL LEATHER AND WOOD PLAQUES. WORLD CUP FITASC AWARDS (BEHIND PLAQUES) ARE UNIQUE.

remarkable. Sunday's second 100 targets were a bit softer, but still had some teeth and some tough true pairs. Overall, Richie Fresella Jr. did a fine job of target setting – and didn't mind challenging us as shooters to score well.

At day's end, Lieske had held on to his lead, combining a 97-91 for the win at 188. Christian Suter made a valiant effort with a combined score of 185 for Runner-up. Miguel Leal (179) took Masters with McGuire and Fennell taking second and third with a 178 tie. Stefanie Steinkraus took home her second award, topping the Lady concurrent with 155. Veteran first went to McMurrin (163) and Super Veteran Hartlage (173) won his concurrent. Murray Horwich, the only Senior Super Veteran, shot 134. In the Junior concurrent, Michael Everson topped the field with a superb 175 and Christobal Leal (167) took second.

Next Up

Northbrook Sporting Club is a first class ground with just about everything it takes to make a popular and successful shooting club. The staff did a great job of keeping everything running smoothly and the fact that they have excellent food service



ABEL SPIRE WINS JUNIORS AFTER A SPECTACULAR SHOOT OFF WITH SEAN KUMOUT.



BILL MCGUIRE, RECIPIENT OF THE WORLD CUP TROPHY.

available for breakfast, lunch, and dinner was a real plus.

All of this combines to make for more than enough reason to attend their next major event, the UK/US Masters FITASC Championship (August 20-22). Registration forms are available on line at www.northbrooksportingclub.com as well as a complete list of the results of this event. I know I will be back in August – and hope to see you there. ■