

# Hunters Education

## A SPECIAL EVENT IN KANSAS

By: Neil Smith

Imagine a group of young kids and teenagers arriving at an open field and putting their shooting, gun handling, Kansas Hunting law knowledge, and Hunters Educational Skills to the test. That is exactly what happened at Echo Valley Range in Southeast Kansas (<http://www.echovalleysrange.com>) located outside of Dexter, Kansas the first Saturday of October, 2007. This event is hosted by a local group of volunteers known as the Sporting Friends of Cowley County (SFCC) utilizing grant money provided by Friends of the National Rifle Association (FNRA), range equipment from Echo Valley Range, rifles, shotguns and muzzle loading rifles belonging to SFCC and support from the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks Hunters Education Department. A small fee is charged to all those that attended to help with additional costs and they may bring their own firearms and bows if they wish to use them in the events. The intent is to have the kids arrive at the range ready to participate in all events and be scored utilizing equipment provided at the range complex. This is done so that anyone can participate and not have to worry about having all the necessary items, which for some, can be a great burden.

Sixty-nine youth were in attendance at this year's event. They were divided into two groups for awards and trophies; Junior Division, ages eight to 12, and Senior Division, ages 13 to 18. Then each individual was assigned to a group that went from event to event to participate. Kansas law requires anyone over the age of 16 to possess a valid Hunters Education certificate to be able to purchase a hunting license. We open this event to any kid as young as eight so long as they are accompanied by a sponsor. Sponsors are required for all in attendance under the age of sixteen. Events that kids participate in and are evaluated and scored on are:

- Hunters Education Safety Trail
- Hunters Education Written Test
- Shotgun Range
- .22 caliber Rifle Range

.50 Caliber Muzzle Loading Rifle Range  
Archery Range

Any shooter may bring their privately owned firearm or bow to use in these events. But those firearms and bows are inspected for safe operation and worthiness prior to being allowed on the range.

The Hunters Education Safety Trails intent is to provide a realistic scenario, such as, "You are getting ready to go hunting for pheasant in season." The individual being tested will then have to select which equipment is needed to go out and harvest the game. Including, which license, tags, or stamps that may be required. Permission to hunt from the property owner and a description of where they are allowed to hunt is provided. Through the use of "pop-up" wildlife and three dimensional decoys, placed along the safety trail, questions are asked of the hunter and they are scored as they walk along the trail. This is not only a test of the participant's knowledge of safety and Kansas hunting laws, it also provides them the chance to evaluate their own hunting 'ethics'. It also provides them a chance to learn while they are being tested. Kansas Hunters Education Instructors, along with retired and current Kansas Natural Resource Officers, evaluate and score those tested.

The Hunters Education written test consisted of written questions about hunting, safety, hunting ethics, wildlife identification, and knowledge of Kansas hunting laws. This is considered by some of the kids as the hardest part of the course. Due to the inexperience of some (both young and older kids), and the lack of not having attended a Kansas Hunters Education Course, this score is used as one of the primary tie-breakers for ranking in the awards later in the day. We hope that these potential hunters and shooters will continue to go afield or to ranges and get more and more experience so that their knowledge base and scores will improve with each outing and score better at future events. This event was scored by Kansas Hunters Education Instructors.



At our shotgun range, participants utilize 12 and 20-gauge shotguns and clay target throwers owned by the SFCC group with shooters using commercial field loads. Even though they are only shooting blue rock targets, the throwers are set up to present in-coming, out-going and crossing targets for the shooter to engage. Any shooter that brought a shotgun that the club did not have ammunition for was required to bring new manufactured ammunition. No reloaded ammunition is allowed on the range for the competition due to safety concerns. We had some shooters using .410 bore and 16-gauge shotguns to engage their targets. Some shooters had never fired a shotgun before and were given a brief period of instruction at the range prior to being scored. This is done in the hopes that they at least will get a nice score for the event. Instructors were National Rifle Association shotgun certified and scorers were volunteers or sponsors that volunteered to help.

The .22 caliber rifle range is used to evaluate the shooter in three different shooting positions and shooting from distances of ten to twenty-five yards. Rifles and ammunition were provided by the sporting group and there were many shooters that brought their own rifles to use. All of the club

rifles are bolt-action type with the majority of the personally owned rifles being semi-automatic along with a few lever-actions also. The shooter would first shoot ten rounds at a target to check the accuracy of their rifle and make any sight adjustments as necessary. Then they would shoot for their score. The distances that they shot from were, seven, 15, and then 25 yards. Positions were sitting supported, kneeling supported and then the prone position respectively. Targets utilized were three inch 'shoot-n-see' targets pasted to a nine inch paper plate which was stapled to cardboard backing. This type of target was easy for them to see and for the range personnel to score.

Fifty caliber muzzleloading rifle range was probably the first time that most of the kids had ever shot or experienced this type of rifle. The club provided the few rifles that they owned and volunteers also brought along their own to supplement them and provide a variety of sizes and weights for the shooters. Every group of shooters was given a safety briefing prior to handling any firearm. Also, a demonstration on the correct loading procedure and then the rifle was taken to the firing line and fired. Those tested shot at a full size ground hog target for

score and utilized the same paper plate target as used on the .22 caliber range to get a feel for the rifle they were shooting and to make any sight adjustments as needed. They shot three rounds at the paper plate and then five at the ground hog target for score. Rifles provided were cap locks and modern in-lines of both bolt and break action types. We even had one kid bring his own muzzle loader to use.

For the archery event, the participants utilized universal recurve bows that are part of the bow hunters education and provided by Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. They were given a safety briefing and then provided initial shooting instruction with a brief overview of what they were expected to do. Then they fired a practice round at paper plates hanging on large hay bales. Then, they fired for score at a different target and were also provided with three dimensional targets for score. Many shooters brought their own bows. This was the first time that many had experienced shooting a bow.

Awards and trophies were given to: Senior Overall Winner and Junior Overall Winner. These were the highest total score having shot or participated in all events. Then there were trophies given in all events for first, second, and third place. All

participants were also given a shooters medal for attending the event. Also, a bag full of literature and goodies were given to all.

The purpose of this event is to provide a means for all attending to evaluate their shooting skills, hunting and safety knowledge, and experience new shooting types or techniques. This club's hope and vision is to not only provide this event but to continue the shooting and hunting heritage for future generations. For many, it was the first time that they fired a shotgun, bow, muzzleloader or rifle. We hope that they not only enjoyed the experience, but look forward to getting their own and start making their own memories either afield or on the practice range. It takes a lot of time and volunteers to put on an event such as this. It is through their efforts and dedication that I dedicate this writing.





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Questions? Email [Rhonda@mgmtargets.com](mailto:Rhonda@mgmtargets.com) also available at phone (208) 344-4524

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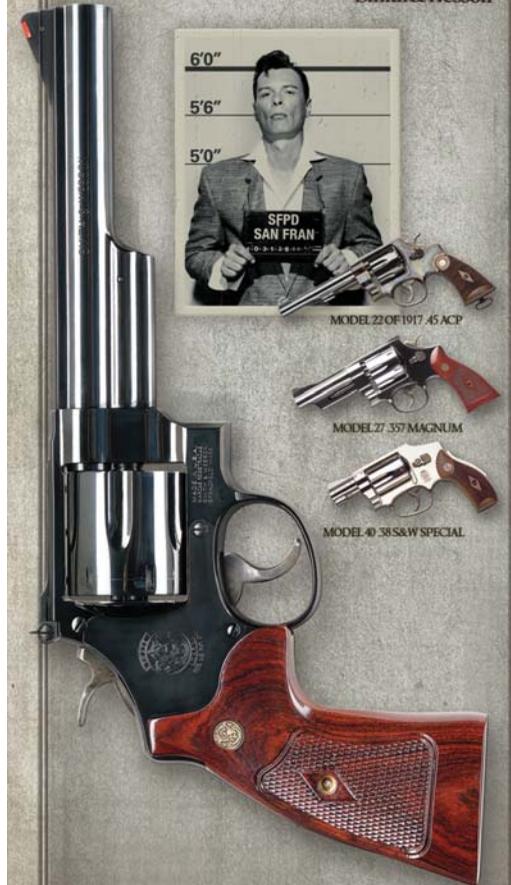


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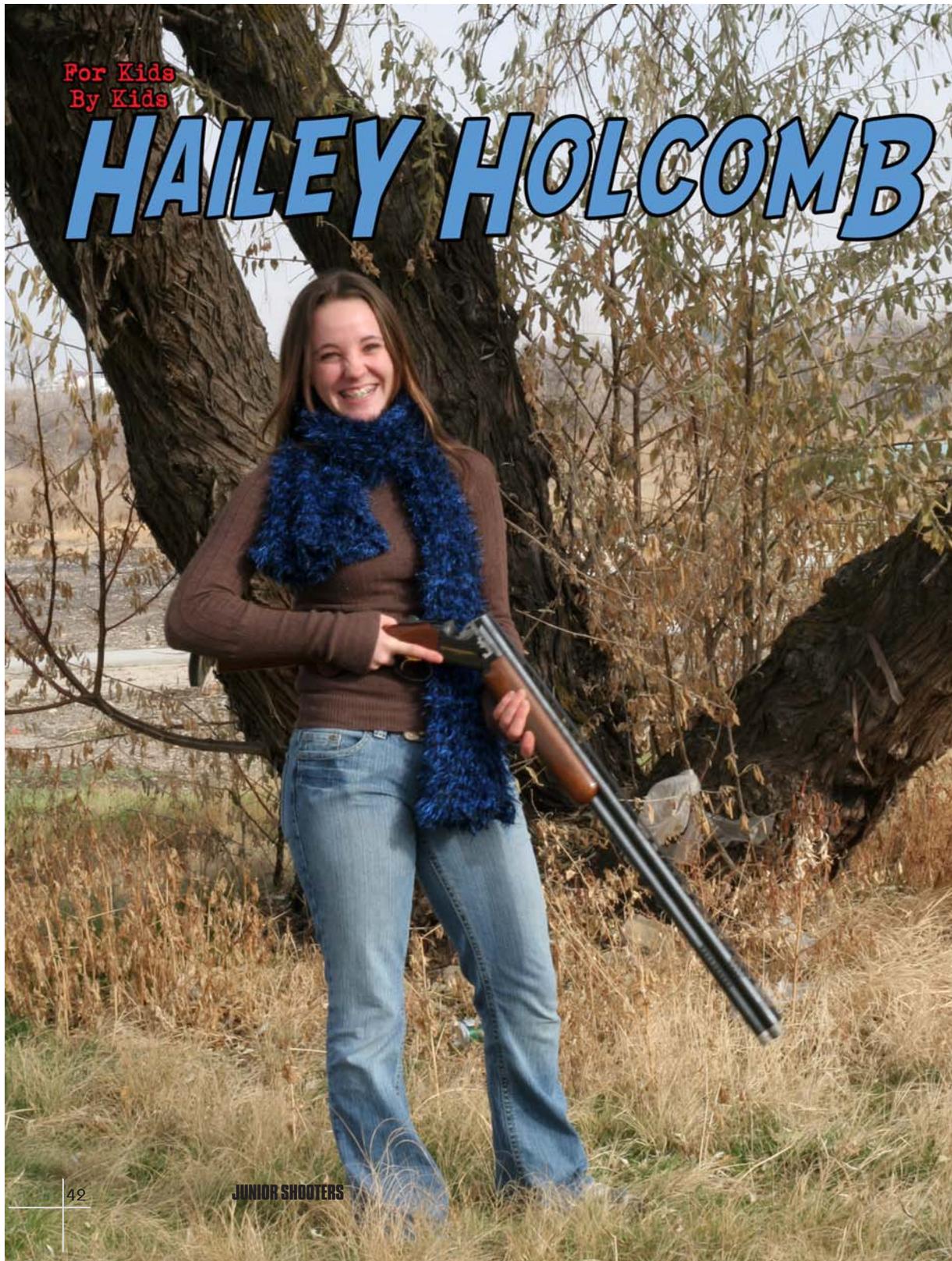


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For Kids  
By Kids

# HAILEY HOLCOMB



**W**hen I was little, I remember going bird hunting with my father. Too young to actually shoot, I would watch the dogs and let them out of the blind when it was time to retrieve the birds. I loved every minute, even when it rained and was cold.

You would think that's where it all started, but it wasn't. I didn't do a lot of shooting after that until a couple of years ago. My dad started shooting trap again at the Izaak Walton League - Caldwell Idaho Chapter Gun Club. I would go with him once in a while to spend time with him and see what trap shooting was all about. They had a job opening for trap help and since I was there with my dad, I took the job. Now, that's when it all started. I had been working there for about a month when a couple of the guys nagged me into shooting. They would give me extra shells and their guns just to try to see if I liked it. And boy, did I. The more I shot, the more I wanted to shoot. I was hooked. The guys at the club all wanted to help me with how to stand, how to hold the gun, when to shoot, where to look, what loads to use, etc. It was overwhelming at times but eventually I found my own way that was comfortable and I could shoot consistently. I thank them for all their help and support through the learning process. Without them I would still be scoring and not shooting. I started out shooting a 12-gauge Winchester Super X Model 1 trap gun owned by my mom. It was cut down to fit her and worked well for me. They say practice makes perfect, so I practiced and practiced. My dad finally told me to slow down and work on form, what I was doing right and what I was doing wrong. Sometimes I could sweet talk him into letting me shoot more than he felt I should.

We have some excellent shooters in Caldwell. They include Nicky Adams and Charlie Woodruff. Nicky was the Idaho

representative to the Grand American in 2006, and in 2007 at the Grand American shot his first 200 straight. Charlie was the 2007 Grand American Champion Veteran. I also shoot with other junior shooters, Steven Fox, Lisa Stewart, Max and Alisa Hillman. We all help one another, encourage each other and enjoy some friendly teasing while shooting. I watched all the different styles of shooters and incorporated what worked for me into my style. My dad says I have excellent form regardless of whether I am shooting, trap, sporting clays or birds; I am consistent with how I hold my gun. I am also very safety conscious. Handling a gun safely is top priority and I feel you can never be too safe.

Nicky Adams gave me a shooting vest that was too small for him, and I had to learn to shoot with the extra padding. But it made it easier to hold the shells and I felt like one of the guys. It's amazing how what you wear affects how you have to hold the gun and how you shoot. Heavier clothing restricts your movements and you have to compensate for that.

The board at the Izaak Walton League - Caldwell Chapter Gun Club approached my parents about sponsoring some junior shooters for the state Pacific International Trap shooter Association (PITA) shoot in Boise, ID., June 8, 9, & 10 2007. They would pay the fees and supply the shells. My parents agreed and the pressure was on. I practiced but I was nervous that I would disappoint the people who believed in me. Friday, June 8, was a sunny day and I was really nervous. My dad and I signed up to shoot with Mom there for support and to take pictures. Too many pictures. The first 25 was the worst. I was shaking and couldn't concentrate. After that though, the training kicked in and I knuckled down to shoot my best. I came out on

BY: HAILEY HOLCOMB

## TRAP EXTRAORDINAIRE





top of the junior shooters with an 81 and won that day's singles event. The next two days were to be combined for a best out of 200 targets. Saturday, the pressure was off as I knew what I needed to do and wasn't worried about what else was going on. I shot consistently, finishing with an 84 and knew that what I shot on Sunday would tell the tale. Sunday morning we got up and it was raining. Great, I thought. I'm not sure where it came from, but knowing it was going to be tougher in the rain, I felt I could do it and put my head down until it was my turn to shoot, looked up and said "pull" 100 times. I shot 91 out of that 100 and had the best scores of my short shooting career, only two behind my dad. That score put me at the top of the junior shooters and I received a silver belt buckle for being "Junior PITA State Champion." I wear it proudly.

A couple of weeks later, back at the gun club, I shot my first straight 25 out of 25. I was so excited to do it in front of all the people who helped and supported me. I turned around and Mom was calling Dad on the cell phone to share the news with him. I shot another 25, breaking 24. Shooting a straight 50 is my next goal as well as more 25's. I also want to start shooting doubles.

I wanted to try shooting dad's 12- gauge Browning Sporting Clay over and under. He had fixed it for Lisa, who works with me at the Caldwell Gun Club, to shoot and I felt that if I wanted to shoot doubles, I needed an over and under. I really liked the gun and was shooting even better scores but the recoil was beating me up. Dad and Mom talked to Bill Groff about putting a Graco recoil system on the gun. It is wonderful. I can adjust it for me and what I am wearing. I no longer have bruises on my shoulder from the recoil. I hope Dad knows he isn't getting his gun back.

Trap shooting looks easy. five targets at five stations. No problem. Well, I thought so too, but now I know that it isn't. Wind, rain, hot sun, time of day, color of targets, the gun, the shells, people you shoot with, they all effect how you shoot. Every club is different, with terrain and setup. But each one is a challenge and challenges are what make us strong. I love trap shooting, not only do I get to shoot, but I enjoy talking with other shooters and listening to the tall tales they tell, my dad included. I encourage any young shooter to try trap shooting. It's fun and rewarding and a great way to enjoy being outdoors. When you begin, you will get lots of help. Take it all in, listen, and then use what works for you and don't be afraid to ask them to back off until you figure it out. Never give up. You will have ups and downs, but never give up. Even the best shooters have their bad days.

I want to thank the Izaak Walton League - Caldwell Chapter board members and club members for always supporting the junior shooters and for encouraging us to shoot. I want to thank my mom and dad for letting me enjoy the sport of trap shooting and for supporting me not only with this sport but in every aspect of my life.

If you are interested in shooting, please call us at (208) 459-2616. The club is open Saturdays, 1 to 5, December through February and Tuesdays from 6 to 10, March through November.

Good luck and happy shooting.



Look below, that picture could be of you. Seriously. We are looking for kids, teens, and in-betweens to spotlight each issue. Go to [juniorshooters.net](http://juniorshooters.net) for more information. Or give us a call at (800) 342-0904.



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For Kids  
By Kids

# ZACH PARNHAM



BY: ZACH PARNHAM

# GUNSLINGER

*By the age of 10*

My name is Zack Parnham and I am 10 years old. I enjoy cowboy fast draw shooting. One day my mom asked me if I would like to shoot with her, I couldn't wait to give it a try. Like the saying goes, "Try it, you'll like it," and I did.

The first thing I did was learn what to do and what not to do. Jerry Kirschling, a friend of our family, taught me never to point a gun at anyone. He also taught me to always think so that my actions are always safe, and to keep my gun pointed down range at all times. A gun is not a toy, it is a weapon. I also learned to respect my gun and to never take it out to show my friends. The only time I can take my gun out is when my mom, dad, or an older adult is around.

When I started shooting, I was shooting 1.980 seconds. Now I am shooting in the seven-tenths and eight-tenths of a second. That is a little over half a second. Shooting has built my confidence and concentration levels.

Jerry Kirschling is a Marshal for cowboy fast draw. He has a lot of patience with me. Jerry encourages me to take my time. He tells me that speed will come, but I need to hit the target first.

I am going into fifth grade at McKinley School in Stevens Point, Wisconsin. My fourth grade teacher was having parent-teacher conferences and told my mom that I had been telling her all about shooting. The teacher could not believe that I was nine years old and shooting a .45 caliber gun. She said, "Sure, you are." My comment was, "Yes, I really am shooting a .45 caliber gun." When mom went in, the first thing out of my teacher's mouth was "Does Zack really shoot a .45 caliber gun?" My mom said, "Yes, and he does quite well."

I like to write papers and tell the other kids about what happens on the weekends when we shoot. My mom also likes to shoot. She is pretty good at it. My dad doesn't want to shoot, but that's ok. My older brother Ben went out shooting with us the other day and I beat him!

Shooting well takes a lot of practice. Whatever you do for practice means you need to do it everyday. I hope someday to have my own targets at my house so I can practice more and someday be able to be the number one cowboy fast draw shooter in the world.



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## TAPCO Tactical Rifle Stocks

Junior Shooters recently received two after-market tactical rifle stocks from TAPCO, Inc. that should be a big hit with those involved in tactical competition events. Manufacturing stocks for a variety of rifles including Ruger Mini-14 and Mini-30, Ruger 10-22, AR-15/M-16, AK-47, SKS, and many other tactical and recreational rifles, TAPCO is also filling military and para-military orders around the world. Pictured is their Mini-14 desert-camo style pistol-grip stock with collapsible butt-stock. Well built and easy to install, TAPCO replacement stocks are a great value and ergonomically user friendly. You can learn more about all the products available from TAPCO by going online to [www.tapco.com](http://www.tapco.com).



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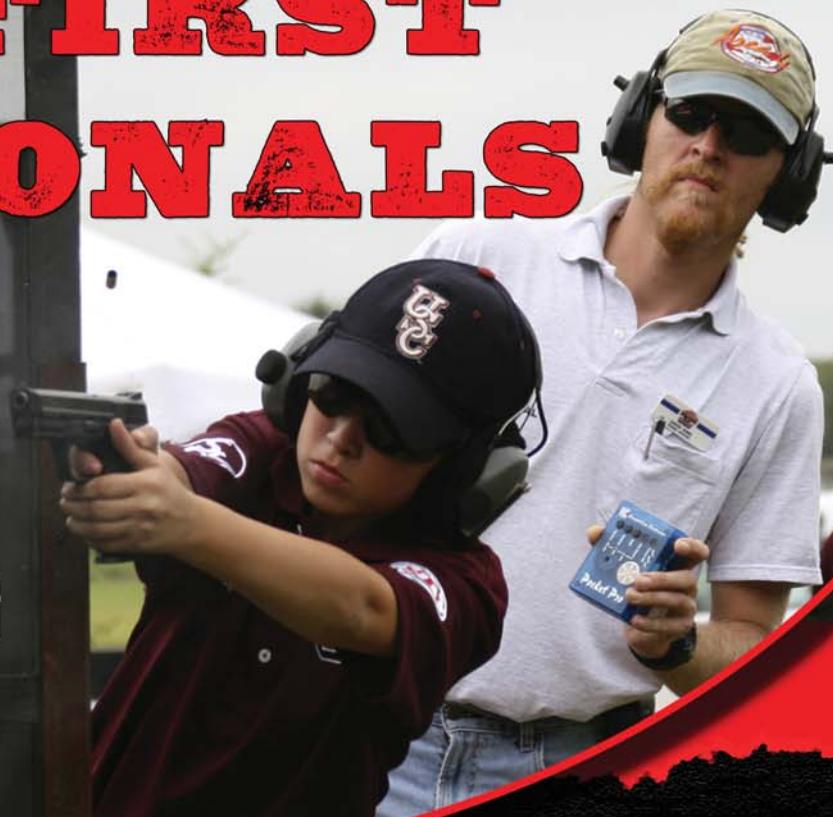
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For Kids  
By Kids

# MY FIRST NATIONALS



By: John Suber  
Photography by:  
Michelle DeHan of  
Promotion Photography



I am fourteen years old. I live in Columbia, South Carolina and I have been a competitive shooter for two years and am one of the youngest certified Range Officers (RO) in the United States.

I have been around shooting sports most of my life (sitting in deer stands and going on dove shoots with my dad). He started taking me to the shooting range when I was about three and he taught me to shoot with a Chipmunk .22 rifle. In addition, I went to USPSA matches and helped by picking up brass and pasting targets. Eventually, I learned to score stages and work in statistics at major matches.

Two years ago, my dad let me try his STI .40 caliber and decided that I was finally big enough to begin shooting pistols competitively. My first match was a classifier match at Mid-Carolina Rifle Club in Gaston, South Carolina. I competed in the Limited Division. I was nervous because I was the youngest shooter there, but I really enjoyed myself. That year my dad and I traveled to major matches including the Florida State Championship, South Carolina State Championship, and the Area 6 Championship. Before I went to the 2006 Fraternal Order of Police Summer Blast, I went to Camp

Shootout in Shreveport, Louisiana. Camp Shootout is USPSA's junior camp. That was the first time that I had ever been to Camp Shootout. It helped me so much and I had the chance to go back the following year. At the 2006 Summer Blast in York, Pennsylvania, I won high junior in Limited, shooting the STI. By the fall of 2006, I switched to a .38 Super Open gun. I became interested in Open because one of my dad's friends let me shoot his gun. I thought it was so much fun so my dad bought me one. My accuracy and speed improved dramatically. I reached C class very quickly.

In February of 2007, we got a phone call inviting "John Suber" to the Limited/Production/Revolver Nationals in Tulsa, Oklahoma in September of 2007. At first my mom thought that the invitation was for my dad (because his given name is John, but he goes by Jack). Dad called to check and we realized that I was the one being invited! My win at the Summer Blast had qualified me for Nationals. My dad decided that we would compete in Production division at the Nationals.

To train, I began shooting a 9mm Smith & Wesson M&P set up for production (I took the M&P to Camp Shootout so that I could train



FALL 2008

for the Nationals). The M&P is a great pistol, very reliable, and a great starter gun. It fits my hand perfectly. I spent the remainder of the summer practicing and competing with the M&P. I was fortunate to get sponsorship from Speed Shooter Specialties. Mr. Kenny Dickerson outfitted me with a holster, mag pouches, and parts for the M&P.

Knowing that I would miss a week of school for Nationals, I had to do most of my work before I left while still practicing. My school is very supportive of my traveling to different states to compete. They just say that I have to complete all of my school work before I return. Believe me, that is so hard when you know that you are going to shoot guns and miss a whole week of school.

Here is what Nationals was like ... My dad and I arrived in Tulsa on September 7, 2007, which gave us plenty of time to get to the range, register, and look at some of the stages. The U.S. Shooting Academy hosted the Nationals. It is a great place with grassy bays and a pond on one side. We were assigned to squad 17, which was a great squad. They were very friendly and fun to be around. They helped me find good positions to shoot from, because there were some places that I could not see over. Also, the ROs were very kind. Our shooting began on September 9<sup>th</sup>. I was very nervous on my first stage, but after shooting it I relaxed. On the second day, September 10<sup>th</sup>, I celebrated my 14<sup>th</sup> birthday! It was the greatest birthday because I got to shoot on the same day and that night I had a steak dinner with my dad! That was so much fun. Despite terrible weather for the rest of the match, we had a great time! We were fortunate that it would stop raining when it was our time to shoot, however, all of the stages were a muddy mess. On some stages the mud was ankle deep! For the most part I shot well, except I bombed three stages because my sight got knocked loose. We did not realize it until my dad noticed that I was missing 10-yard poppers by three to four feet. Fortunately we were able to fix it in the safe area.

My favorite stage was the seesaw stage (stage 13, Balance Act). You had to stand on one side of the seesaw and move across to see other targets. This was really fun because you had to know where you were going to shoot from and you had to keep your balance at the same time. The hardest stage was where you exited a car, grabbed your gun off the backseat, and engaged the targets (stage 10, I Hate Drop Turners). It was the most difficult because you had to shoot poppers at 25-30 yards. One of my best stages was stage 15, The Split. On this stage it was required to kneel on the ground, shoot two targets, and engage a swinger. On two stages you had to hold ammo cans in one hand and shoot with the other hand. Some stages had low ports which were easy for me but were more challenging for adults, because they had to squat. There was one stage where you had to lie prone. I am glad that I did not have to shoot that stage in the rain.

While we were there, I saw many shooters whom I have met over the two years that I have been competing. It was fun to see and talk to the "big name shooters" like Phil Strader, Jerry and Kay Mickulek, Mike Seeklander, Dave Sevigny, et al. The night of September 13<sup>th</sup> was the banquet. There was great food, speeches by the winners, and best of all, prizes! Even if a person did not win their class, everyone got a prize. There were gift certificates, guns, bullets, hats, and lot of other cool stuff. This was the first prize table that I had ever participated in. Just because I was smaller and a lot younger than everyone else, does not mean that I was treated any differently. I was treated just like every other competitor there.

I had so much fun at the Nationals and I learned a lot. The only thing I did not like was the rain, but other than that it was the best match ever. I want to thank all of the people who helped to run the Nationals and make practical shooting possible. Thank You!



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# INTRODUCING A NEWCOMER



BY: BILL DUNN - NSSF



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JUNIOR SHOOTERS

# 10 WAYS

## TO ENSURE A CAN'T-WAIT-TO-GO-AGAIN EXPERIENCE

For a newcomer, getting involved in the shooting sports can sometimes be a challenge. Not knowing how or where to begin is a common barrier for first-timers who'd like to get involved.

That's where experienced shooters can be a big help. Introducing a family member or friend to the shooting sports can be fun and rewarding, and could also lead to a lifetime of enjoyment in the shooting sports for that first-time shooter.

The National Shooting Sports Foundation's (NSSF) STEP OUTSIDE® program, which encourages sportsmen and sportswomen to introduce newcomers to the shooting sports, offers the following tips for introducing a newcomer to shooting and how to provide a can't-wait-to-go-again experience.

- 1) *Instill safety, etiquette and ethics.* Teaching safety standards gives newcomers the responsibility they'll need to enjoy a lifetime of great shooting experiences.
- 2) *Keep it fun. Don't get too serious or competitive.* There's no need to turn novices into pros on their first outing. It's far more important to just have a good time.
- 3) *Start with basics.* If you learned to shoot when you were young, today you likely perform the whole process automatically. Make a conscious effort to explain and demonstrate step-by-step what newcomers should do, so they will feel comfortable later doing these things on their own.
- 4) *First things first.* Put yourself in a newcomer's shoes. What things are most important for first-time success? Identify their dominant eye and adapt their actions accordingly; show them how to hold, load and unload their firearm properly; make sure the stock of the gun is seated securely against the shoulder; check to see they've taken the proper stance; explain where and on what the shooter should focus attention.
- 5) *Create instant success.* Start with something simple and recognize small accomplishments. Then, gradually move to more challenging targets or distances.
- 6) *Be positive.* If you build a newcomer's self esteem and confidence, it is more likely they'll enjoy shooting and want to go again. A well-timed compliment can go a long way.
- 7) *Provide appropriate equipment.* Make sure the equipment you use is the right size and weight for a newcomer.
- 8) *Hands-on instruction helps.* Everyone learns best by doing. Lecture is necessary, but as much as possible, intersperse the talking with doing.
- 9) *Choose the right location.* Convenience is a consideration. Whether at a public or private facility, NSSF offers online resources to find great places to shoot -- and hunt -- through its portal website, [www.huntandshoot.org](http://www.huntandshoot.org).
- 10) *Help them continue.* Most people are uneasy about participating on their own after just one outing. The best way to make sure your guest continues is for you to act as a mentor until the guest feels comfortable doing everything on his or her own. Each time, have your guest assume more responsibility for his or her actions. And most importantly, have fun!

Since its inception, STEP OUTSIDE has helped introduce hundreds of thousands to target shooting, hunting, fishing and archery by encouraging outdoor enthusiasts to invite others to share in their outdoor experiences. Learn more at [www.stepoutside.org](http://www.stepoutside.org).

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# IN PURSUIT OF GOLD



*By: ANDY DONEY - THE 2007 UNITED YOUNG  
EAGLES UNDER 21 COACH AND SHOOTER*



The World Long Range Fullbore Championship was set to begin the morning of August 26, 2007, and the USA Young Eagles were ready to pursue the gold. From the moment we reached Connaught Rifle Range located in Nepean, Canada, we knew that our mission was not only to represent the United States of America in a good manner, but also to win the World Long Range Team matches in the Under 25 and 21 categories.

The week before the World Championship team match, the team members competed in the Canadian National Matches. Every member of the USA Young Eagles came off the team bus ready to compete. We posted tough scores, and frequently saw Sherri Hurd, Ty Cooper, and Josh Harless named in the top 25 competitors for any given match. Successfully executed matches did not just extend to those three, many of the Young Eagles were frequently seen getting their triggers weighed after they shot a "possible" (50 out of 50). Triggers are weighed in international competitions after a shooter completes a course of fire without losing any points. This is done to make sure that the shooters are abiding by the trigger weight rule.

Despite the team being separated into squads by age, under 25 and 21, the entire team had excellent cohesiveness. With every good score that was shot, congratulations were given. It definitely was a welcoming event to see good scores being shot by my teammates. But when a poor performance occurred, there were open arms waiting to help or just console. The extraordinary cohesiveness was not just seen on the firing line. When it came to extracurricular activities, no team at the World Championships could rival our games of corn hole (a bean bag toss game) and volleyball. The other teams quite often referred to us as the "team that gets too much enjoyment out of throwing a bean bag through holes," or even "the team that punishes its members by making them carry a paddle around for one day if that person does something stupid." One example of this was when Brian Landwehr accidentally left his 800 meter zero on his rifle, when he took a sighting shot at 300 meters. He

was obviously a little high - no big deal, right? Well the woodchuck that he shot in the chest didn't think so. So Brian had to carry the paddle for putting the wrong zero on his rifle.

When the prestigious Governor General's shoot-off came around, 10 percent of the 50 shooters that made the cut for the shoot-off were Young Eagles. No small feat considering that there were over 500 shooters competing for one of those 50 slots. Those individuals that made the cut were Josh Harless, Sherri Hurd, Joseph Kovac, Michelle Gallagher (team big sister), and myself. The aggregate for making the cut extended six matches, and the 50<sup>th</sup> shooter selected only dropped two points in those six matches combined. That is some tough shooting considering they shot twice at 300 meters, 500 yards, and 600 yards.

With the World Championships getting near, the final assignments of our two squads were announced. The coaches of the Under 25 squad were Ty Cooper, Sherri Hurd, and Josh Harless; while their counter parts on the Under 21 squad were David Shank, Kyle Liebetrau, and myself.

August 26<sup>th</sup> finally arrived and I can confidently say that the USA Young Eagles team was ready. The Under 25 squad knew what they had to do, and so did the Under 21 squad. After a quick cheer from our chief morale officer, Matt Austin, David and I found our seats in the middle of the firing line, getting our gear ready to coach the Under 21 squad. We laid the shooting mats next to us; my shooter was to the right of me, and David's shooter was to the left of him.

Our first two shooters kicked open the gates and we were off to a running start. Both shooters cleaned their targets, with David's shooter beating mine by one "V." Our second shooters performed well too, dropping three points altogether. We had to juggle around for our third wave of shooters. Kyle stepped in and coached me, while David coached Jennifer Nyberg. After two scary sighters, my score was saved by Kyle's coaching and I shot a clean with 6v's.



THE AUTHOR, ANDY DONEY

Upon leaving the firing line to move back to the 600-yard line, the team's founder Ian Cheeseman pulled me aside and said that I shot and coached great. He also said I needed to be bolder with my adjustments as a place for improvement. I took the criticism, and used it to help extend the lead that we had over our competition.

During the lunch break we learned that the Under 25 squad was doing well, too. Before we knew it, lunch was over and we were back into the competitive mode. The next yard line was 800-meters, and the wind started to pick up. At first I was a little worried about it, but the team matches earlier in the week proved that David, Kyle, and I can read the Canadian wind better than our competition. Kyle was excited by the pick up of the wind, but I didn't have the heart to tell him I wished the mirage was boiling. We rolled with the punches, and the coaches kept the shooters on top of the wind. We continued to extend our lead and we were having a great time.

By the time we finished the 900-meter line, we had extended our lead by more than 30 points. We were definitely on top of the leader board, and the next Under 21 squad to be crowned as World Champions. Our Under 25 team was in a battle for the lead with one shooter to go in the match. Herds of people watched as the last rounds flew down range. The under 25 team fell short of their goal of gold by a point, and finished in second place winning silver.

The USA Young Eagles had an extremely successful year in the World Long Range Championships. We won both gold and silver medals, and we did it with style. The range officers enjoyed our company and knew that they could count on us to help out

anytime, and the woodchucks were happy to see Brian leave. There is no doubt in my mind that the help that we received from our countless supporters and our sponsors: Sierra, Lapua, Savage, Hodgdon, Kowa, Sinclair International, and the National Rifle Association Division of Competition, helped shape the entire experience in the positive direction.

I personally owe a great thanks to those sponsors, Ian Cheeseman, Vanessa and Alan Warner (Dan too), and JJ Jackson. If it wasn't for them, I would not have been able to participate in this experience. I also owe a great thanks to Joe Recka. If it wasn't for him, I would never have started in this sport.

I plan on participating on the next team as they compete in the World Long Range Championships in Australia in 2011. We will need new team members so if you are a junior or you know a junior who might be interested, please visit <http://usaunder25team.org>.

*Andy Doney is 20 years old and currently attending Northern Michigan University where he plans on majoring in Marketing Communications. He enjoys football, weightlifting, and hunting, not to mention competitive rifle shooting. His biggest shooting accomplishments include qualifying for the Presidents Hundred and making the Palma 20 in 2006. He was the Wisconsin Long Range Junior Champion, along with being the Master Class Champion for 2006. He was the Wisconsin State John Garand Junior Champion in 2003, 2004, and 2005. This was Andy's first time on the USA Young Eagles Team.*

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# Turn Your Hobby

Specialist Joshua Richmond competes for the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit.



By: Doraine Bennett

# into a Career

On July 19, 2002, Staff Sergeant Christopher S. Hatcher won the Interservice 1,000-yard Service Rifle Championship in Quantico, Virginia., with a score of 200 points and 7 Xs (an X is a bull's-eye used in tie breaking). Firing an M-16 rifle at a target 10 football fields distant, using only iron sights, Hatcher shot 20 out of 20 hits inside the 10 ring – about the size of a dart board. Seven of the 20 shots hit inside the bull's-eye – about the size of a Frisbee. Hatcher is a member of the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit (USAMU). The record is one the unit is still proud to hold.

The Army Marksmanship Unit, established by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956 to raise the standards of marksmanship throughout the Army, trains its soldiers to win. This year USAMU won most of the military rifle events in interservice competition up through the 1,000-yard matches. The team shot against challenging teams from other services to achieve the record and fulfill the first tenet of their mission statement—to win interservice, national, and international competition. The unit sent seven shooters to the 2004 Olympics, and the official U.S. Olympic team gunsmith was a member of USAMU.

The Marksmanship Unit hosts junior shooting competitions including the national championship matches for the Civilian Marksmanship Program and JROTC. During these events, shooters from the unit hold clinics for junior competitors.

There are 81 soldiers in the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit, and 65 of them are competitive shooters. The rest are

gunsmiths, machinists, ammunition technicians, or staff personnel. Recruiters look for potential members in two ways. Outstanding shooters already serving in the Army may be invited to spend a trial period of a few months with the unit. The shooter will then accompany the team to interservice or national championships. After three months of practice and national level competition, if the soldier shows the potential for shooting success, he or she will receive an invitation through the Department of the Army to join the unit and represent the Army.

The unit often spots potential shooters outside the force at international matches. College students who are high level competitors may be invited to join through the Army Unit of Choice program. Once in the program, they have 12 to 24 months to prove their potential as soldiers and champions. Specialist Hattie Johnson is a good example. Hattie joined the unit at 18 and in four years, during her first enlistment, went to the Olympics representing the USA.

Soldiers may remain in the unit as long as they show potential to win or are consistent performers and champions. USAMU evaluates its shooters every year, usually in October, to determine whether to retain them in the Marksmanship Unit or send them back to the force where their experience provides invaluable service to their new units.

USAMU recruits gunsmiths from inside the force and from colleges or gunsmithing schools. Experienced gunsmiths and machinists at the USAMU headquarters at Fort Benning provide advanced training to new recruits in how to fine-tune firearms for exact levels of accuracy. They eliminate every possible variable in order to improve the performance of the rifles, pistols and ammunition. They hand tool gun barrels to tolerances measured in thousandths of an inch.

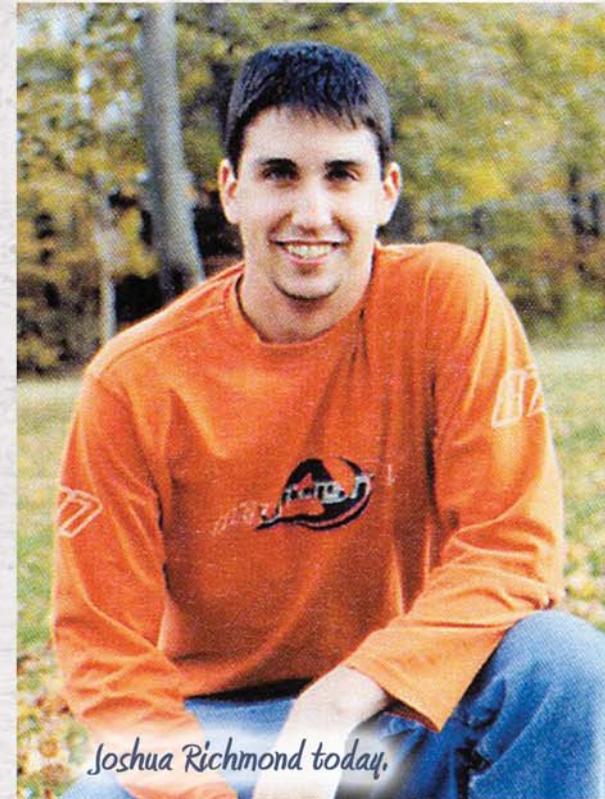
In addition to competing, shooters in the Marksmanship Unit pass the skills they learn in competition on to traditional riflemen. They conduct marksmanship courses at their headquarters on Fort Benning and send teams out to train other soldiers at various locations. Most soldiers have never been challenged to hit more distant targets. One goal of USAMU's training is to send the soldier back to his unit where he will then teach other soldiers the lessons he has learned. USAMU also trains students in ROTC and JROTC programs.

What began for Specialist Joshua M. Richmond as a hobby when he was 12 years old is now a passionate and fulfilling career. He continues to hone his skills as a shooter. He recently won a Gold Medal and Olympic Quota Slot in Double Trap at the World Cup in Italy and another Gold Medal at the Pan-American Games. But Richmond also uses his gifts to serve his country.

"I enlisted in the Army to achieve all my goals and make it to the Olympics," he said. "This unit and the Army are giving me the training and the time I need to become the best in my sport. They allow me to do my hobby as my job."

Turn your hobby into a career with the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit. It is an opportunity worth considering.

For more information, contact the USAMU Public Affairs Office at (706) 545-5436, paula.j.randall@us.army.mil or www.USAMU.com.



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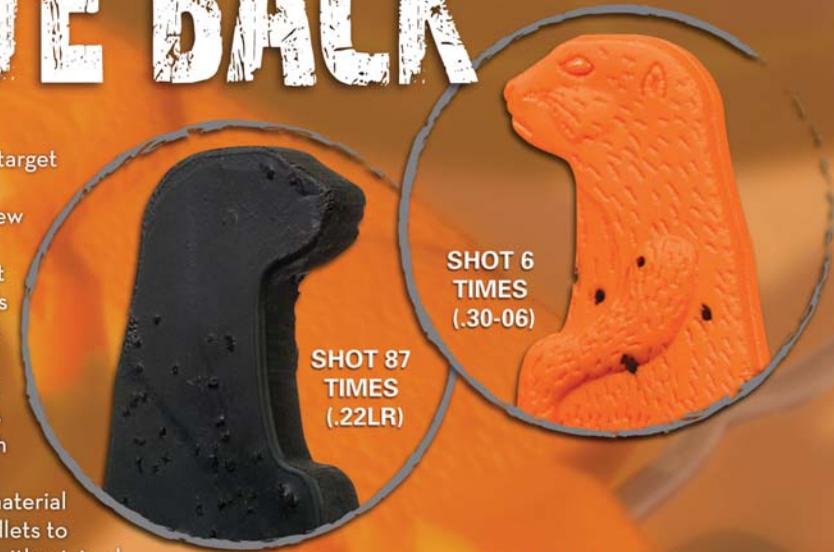
# Advertiser's Index

Action Airgun	5
Bar-Sto Precision Machine	40
Brownells	41
Buffalo Brothers	23
Bushmaster	45
Champion Eyes & Ears (ATK)	IBC
Charles Daly	BC
CreedMoor Sports	56
Crosman	45
Daisy Outdoor Products	33
El Tigre	40
Evil Roy	57
Fiocchi	45
Glock	19
JS Subscription	61
JS We Want Your Article	65
JS Website	29
Kaltron Outdoors/B&P USA/ Vihta ...	23
Kirkpatrick Leather	57
Manson Precision Reamers	57
MEC Engineering	13
National Shooting Sports Foundation	3
National Skeet Shooting Association	56
North American Gun Dog Association	47
Remington	IFC
Remington	40
Remington	29
Rugged Gear	25
SigArms-SigSauer	53
Single Action Shooting Society CAS	24
Single Action Shooting Society MTD	34
SKB Shotguns	34-35
Smith & Wesson	24-25
Smith & Wesson	41
Starline	35
Sturm Ruger	7
Tactical Solutions	23
USAMU/MGM Junior Shooting Camp	40
Wolf Performance Ammunition	45

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