

JUNIOR SHOOTERS

CHRISTMAS GEAR GUIDE!



Making A Mark

**Volume 33
Winter 2018**

**HOME ON
THE RANGE**

**SASP 2018
Nationals**



**SMHS Shooting
Team Shines at
National Event**



**Ruger
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**SASS 2018
Idaho State
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Cover Story
Emma Fleming taking on the varmint prairie dogs on her ranch in North Dakota.

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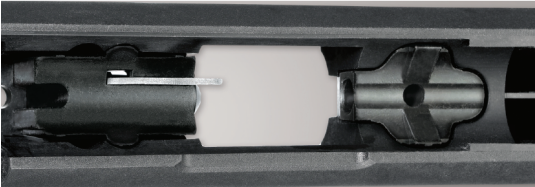
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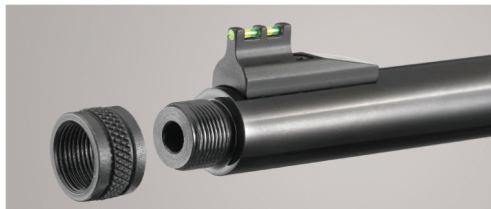
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In high school you should be studying history, government, our constitution, and even politics. Politics can be boring to a young junior. It can also be very interesting. For an adult, politics are frustrating, deeply personal, and moving. Having the right to vote should not be taken lightly; our freedom is based on this right.

Voting for what you believe in is what our country was built on. Having the right to vote is what our forefathers fought for and is our legacy. What about keeping this right and ensuring it is always there? How do we protect the US Bill of Rights and our US Constitution? This is accomplished by voting to ensure that our Bill of Rights is not infringed upon. This means that you must vote for people in government who believe in the Bill of Rights – all of them, not just some of them. Why is this? If one right is infringed upon, then that opens the way for all rights to be infringed upon.

The 2nd Amendment of the Bill of Rights was put in place so that the “people” (the civilian population) will always have the capability to thwart tyranny. The right to keep and bear arms.

This right ensures that the civilian population can own and use firearms. To me, the 2nd Amendment is the most important one of the Bill of Rights for it is the one that gives us the means of protecting all our other rights if a government of tyranny tries to take them away.

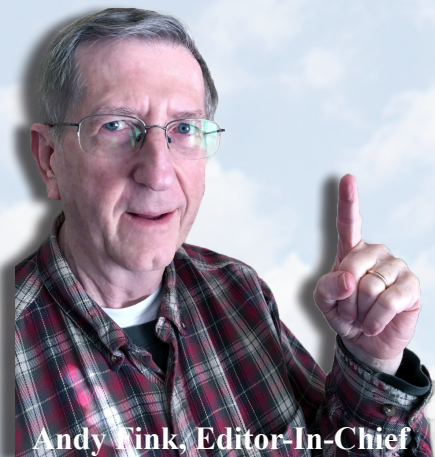
As a junior, you may, “Ask why is this important to me? All I want to do is go plinking, go hunting, shoot my .22, compete in clays or other shooting competitions.” Well, without the 2nd Amendment, you might not have the ability to do this. You also never want to have to live under tyranny. One of the first things a government bent on removing your rights does is eliminate the civilian population’s ownership of firearms.

Don’t let this happen – VOTE! Remember that even local elections count as most politicians start here. Make sure your voice is heard by voting.

As you read this, this year’s election has been completed. Take a look at where you think we are, and remember 2020 will be here before you know it!

A Message From your Editor

Why Vote?



Andy Fink, Editor-In-Chief

SAFE SHOOTING!

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LEUPOLD MARK AR MOD 1

The change in high-power service rifle rules several years ago to allow optics took the high-power world by storm. Some greatly opposed the change, loyal to the iron sights they had competed with for so long. Others embraced the change. Many of these individuals are those who had given up the sport because they were not able to see the iron sights well enough to compete. Scopes have changed the game. Others, like myself, switched because they discovered vision problems they did not realize they had. While I still could see iron sights, I was not able to shoot as well as I was capable of doing with them, though they did not hinder me enough for me to give up completely.

With the legalization of scopes, so came many different choices for competitors. I personally recommend the Leupold Mark AR Mod 1 scope. Service rifle rules restrict scopes to no more than 4.5x power. When I first needed a scope, I looked at several different ones. It largely came down to the reticle for me. I did not like the reticles that had both crosshairs and a circle and/or dot. My dad, guessing before I did that my eyesight would fail me, surprised me with the White Oak Leupold Mark AR Service Rifle Scope. I absolutely love the scope and it has tracked repeatedly for me. It has been easy to use and the reticle is simple – just crosshairs. It was not a large transition for me to move from irons to scope as I had previously shot silhouette with a scope and the Leupold reticle mimicked that of another scope I had used for



deer hunting.

As a competitive high-power shooter, it became necessary for me to equip both of my uppers. Competing in over 30 matches every year, I use one upper for practice and one for matches. This is so I do not burn out a barrel at 200 yards that I need to perform well at the 600-yard line. I wanted to maintain the same platform I was used to shooting and did not want to adjust to a different scope every time I changed uppers.

Around that time, White Oak discontinued their Leupold service rifle scope. With some help from Junior Shooters and Leupold's custom shop, I was able to try a customized version of the Leupold Mark AR service rifle scope that very nearly matched the White Oak scope I have. I ordered the Mark AR Mod 1 1.5-4 x 20 mm in matte finish with a duplex reticle. I had the custom shop add M1 turrets (elevation and windage), change to the wide duplex

reticle, and adjust the parallax to 200 yards. I have been able to seamlessly transition between both the White Oak Leupold scope and the Leupold custom shop scope, putting up great scores with both of them.

The only issue I ever had was realizing that I needed to remember or mark the number of lines above the zero stop so that I did not end up off a revolution in elevation. This is not a defect of the scope, but rather an adjustment that one needs to

By Serena Juchnowski (20)



make when one shoots a scope rather than iron sights. The zero stop is amazingly helpful as it makes it easy to remember and change elevation settings between yard lines. No longer do I have to guess where I am: counting clicks, losing track, then starting over, wasting precious time. The number values and easy-to-move knobs allow me to quickly and easily change the windage and elevation on my rifle without losing track. This is especially important

while adjusting for wind at the 600-yard line.

Every competitor has his or her preference and his or her opinion of what scope works best. The Leupold Mark AR Mod 1 has performed reliably and has been incredibly user-friendly. For me, simple is best. I have heard many competitors complain about “clutter in their glass.” This scope, with the wide duplex reticle (or duplex reticle if not altered by the custom shop), is not “busy” and

thus allows the competitor to focus on the shot without distraction. I am very grateful to both Leupold and to Junior Shooters for working with me and giving me the opportunity to review this scope. For competitors who miss the White Oak Leupold service rifle scope, consult Leupold’s custom shop, they have given me a quality product I am confident in. ©

Idaho Junior girl's State Championship!

By Macey Magoo (16)

SASS 2 State Cha



Getting ready for the saloon stage.

On the first day, there were lots of side matches, but I only competed in the Wild Bunch shoot and the warmup match. It was very hot, but most definitely worth it. I loved every second of shooting those two matches. I ended up taking home first place for both Wild Bunch and the warmup match! Wild Bunch is shot using a 1911, a .45 rifle and model 12 shotgun or an 1897 Winchester pump shotgun. There are two options on how to shoot Wild Bunch: "traditional," which is where you shoot your 1911 with one hand, or "modern" where you shoot it with both hands. I shoot lady's modern. The warmup match was just a

2018 Idaho Championship



few simple, but still challenging stages, where I got a little more time to prepare for the next two days.

The last two days of the shoot was when the real match was held. I was really nervous going into this match because I had been out all season due to breaking my right wrist during a volleyball tournament. I had only gone to one shoot before the state match other than the warmup match. I had never faced this kind of nervousness before any kind of shoot in my life. I was really unsure if I was even going to be able to make it through the match without my wrist hurting since it had barely been out of a cast for a month, but I was dying to get back out on the range.

I was really surprised how well my whole shoot went. I didn't have any major mishaps that were going to set me back. I had a few errors and a procedural, which is where you shoot out of sequence, but those were my only mess-ups thankfully. My first year ever shooting state, the receiver bar in one of my pistols broke and cost me that stage, but nothing that bad happened this year!

State is by far one of my favorite shoots of the year. I get to meet tons of different shooters from all around. I even met another Macey, although her spelling was different than mine; it was Maisie. I almost never meet other people with my same name!

This year, I ended up taking home first overall junior girls and junior girls state champion! I was so excited to even be able to shoot this summer, but the icing on the cake was being able to take home a shiny new buckle! ©

Macey shooting her 1911 .45 ACP in the Wild Bunch event.







*Above: Macey standing in front of the flag and the OTRR sign.
Below: Macey at the unloading table. Note the cowboy who was the last shooter is the the safety officer checking to make sure all firearms are clear. Once Macey is cleared, she then assumes the role of safety officer.*

Shooting her shotgun and wearing her custom Ted Blocker gun rig.





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SCHOLASTIC ACTION SHOOTING PROGRAM

By Rick Leach



Over
225,000
rounds of
ammunition!

What did you do in July? Thousands of competitors and their families headed to the Cardinal Center Shooting Center and Campground in Marengo, Ohio, July 14-21 for the Scholastic Action Shooting Program (SASP) and Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) National Championships. SASP passed an exciting milestone, becoming the world's largest steel match held in history, as well as becoming the world's largest youth action shooting match in history. With 505 registered athletes and over 1200 paid entries, the SASP National Championship has grown 122% in just three years. SASP founding partner sponsors GLOCK, Action Target, Ruger, and the NRA all had representatives on site assisting during the championships.

PROGRAM SASP NATIONALS 2018



“...the world's largest youth action shooting match in history.”



Top athletes competing at SASP Nationals
Left: Not even a broken arm could keep Rookie Miles Beeler from McKenzie Shooting Sports from competing with his team.

SCHOLASTIC ACTION SHOOTING PROGRAM SASP NATIONALS 2018



South Texas Shooters Rookie Optic Rifle National Championship squad.



Custer Chain Blue Lightning Intermediate Optic Rifle National Champion squad from Washington.

Over 225,000 rounds of ammunition were sent down range by competitors during competition and side matches. With athletes competing in Rimfire Pistol, Centerfire Pistol, Rimfire Rifle Iron Sight, Rimfire Rifle Optic Sight, 1911 Pistol, and added this year was Pistol Caliber Carbine. Many of the athletes also compete in the SCTP National Championships, which were going on at the same time at the Cardinal Center. SCTP athletes could compete in the clay sports of Trap, Skeet and Sporting Clays. At the 2018 Championships the two programs worked together to offer the Top Gun Challenge.

Athletes who competed in a SASP pistol discipline and a Rimfire Rifle as well as Trap, Skeet, Sporting Clays with SCTP were able to compete in the Top Gun Challenge. Thomas Keeshan of the North Scott Trap team and the YSSA SASP team, took top honors winning a CZ 612 Target Shotgun, CZ 75 SP01 Phantom Pistol and a 512 American Rifle, all generously donated by SASP and SCTP Sponsor CZ USA. Second place went to Jack Krasulak of the Young Guns of Quail Creek winning a CZ Drake Shotgun. Third place was Graham Eubanks of the Lake Oconee Shooting Team winning a Glock Pistol. Collegiate winners were first place Mark Beardsley of the Mason Dixon Team, second place went to Carson Werth of the Union Grove Broncos, and third place went to Mikaela Leach of Concordia University Wisconsin.

Other notable finishes: Lake Country Action Shooters of Wisconsin won their fourth consecutive Senior Centerfire National Championship; Central Florida Rifle and Pistol Club finished 2nd; Arnold Junior Shooters of MO finished 3rd. In the rifle division, two athletes broke the 30 second time barrier for the first time in SASP Championship history. Ethan Inocando of the South Texas Shooters shot a 29.06 in Optic Rifle, and Nate Gibson of the Steel Shooters of Traer, Iowa shot a 29.68 in Optic Rifle, and close to beating the 30 second time in the new Pistol Caliber Carbine discipline was Talo Marston of Ozaukee Scholastic Shooting Sports from Wisconsin shooting a 30.48.

Special thanks from SASP staff to all our volunteer safety officers who helped all week. Also, thanks to the Straight Shooters of Tucson who came in early and helped set up and Team Gotta of Washington, who helped take down after the match.



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SCHOLASTIC ACTION SHOOTING PROGRAM



SASP teams can compete in both pistol (centerfire and rimfire) and rimfire rifle matches.

SASP uses the discipline of speed shooting on steel targets, which is unique to our program, combining the best features of other disciplines to allow athletes to practice and participate in exciting matches with less specialized equipment.

We hope you, your school or your shooting club will consider becoming part of SASP.



SASP teams can compete in matches that are held locally, state, regionally, and nationally, plus we have a virtual match series that runs year-round.

Questions?

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FAST FACTS



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PROGRAM GOALS:

- Teach the safe and responsible handling and use of firearms
- Provide a supportive team-based environment using the shooting sports as the catalyst for teaching life lessons and skills that emphasize positive character traits and citizenship values
- Introduce young shooters to a sport that can be enjoyed for a lifetime, one that offers a level playing field, and one that all family members can enjoy together

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Scholastic Shooting Sports Foundation is an educational-athletic organization that exists to introduce school-age youths to the shooting sports and to facilitate their continued involvement by providing, promoting, and perpetuating opportunities to safely and enjoyably participate and compete in a high-quality, team-based sport led by trained adult coaches focused on enhancing the personal growth and development of their athletes.

VISION STATEMENT:

To continue to be recognized and respected as the leader in the youth development shooting sports programs.

PROGRAM SPONSOR:

The Scholastic Shooting Sports Foundation (SSSF) is the National Governing Body (NGB) for youth speed shooting and the Scholastic Action Shooting Program (SASP). SASP was started by SSSF in 2012.

PROGRAM SCOPE:

The SASP offers participation in speed shooting using pistols and .22 rifles.

PROGRAM FOCUS:

TEAMS! The SASP is a TEAM-BASED program, focusing on youth development. Participation in SASP should be fun, and there is no place for a win-at-all-costs attitude.

TEAM SUPERVISION:

An adult Volunteer Head Coach leads each team. Volunteer State Advisors provide support for in-state activities and support to their Volunteer Head Coaches and Assistant Coaches. Full-time Directors of Development coordinate the program, and they are assisted by National Coach Trainers and the National Training Team. National Coach Trainers are responsible for coach development and training.

REGISTRATION FEES:

The registration fee for State Advisors, Head Coaches, Assistant Coaches, and Adult Volunteers is \$30.00. This fee covers the cost of liability insurance and a portion of the cost of a background check. All adults working directly with SASP athletes must be registered with the SSSF. To be covered by SSSF liability insurance, a volunteer must be registered with the National Program.

The membership for each registered athlete, including Collegiate, is \$20.00. The fee covers the cost of insurance and awards. All athletes must be registered by their Head Coach.

PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY:

Students in grades 6-12 are eligible for the Intermediate and Senior Divisions in the pistol and rifle disciplines. Students in grades 5 and below are eligible for the Rookie Division in the rifle discipline. There is no age limit for those enrolled as full-time students in the Collegiate Division. College athletes must be enrolled and attending an accredited college or university. All athletes must be academically eligible to participate in their school's extracurricular sports program.

Scholastic Action Shooting Program

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Lake Country Action Shooters (LCAS) Win **Fourth Consecutive** Senior Centerfire National Championship

By Rick Leach

At the 2018 Scholastic Action Shooting Program National Championships, held at the Cardinal Shooting Center in Marengo Ohio, a Wisconsin team won its fourth consecutive Senior Centerfire National Championship. Lake Country Action Shooters (LCAS), shooting out of the Oconomowoc Sportsman's Club in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, won the 2018 centerfire

championship with a squad time of 186.36. LCAS has won their fourth consecutive championship with squads made up of different athletes each year. There has been only one consistent athlete on each of those four squads, that being head coach Dave Richman's daughter, Teagan. This year's championship squad was made up of Teagan Richman who shot a 40.10, Alex Madson

43.77, James Van Gilder 44.65, and Jack Gerstmeier with a 57.84. For three years Coach Richman also had his son Dylan on the squad before he went on to shoot collegiate this season. This year Coach Richman continues to coach LCAS without any of his children on the squad. Not only has LCAS shooter won team titles, but each of the last four years both the individual high male

By Rick Leach



and female athletes were also members of LCAS.

Like most of the coaches in the Scholastic Action Shooting Program (SASP), Coach Richman practices Positive Coaching Alliance principles, and two years ago Richman was recognized by them after being nominated by athletes and parents from his team. Richman also is open to discuss how he has had such great success with his athletes, and freely discusses it with other coaches to help them build their programs.

Other Wisconsin coaches have even attended LCAS practices at Richman's invitation where he openly shares how he trains his athletes. Richman reloads all the competition rounds for his team on his Dillon 650, with a bullet he designed and developed for Acme Bullets in Wisconsin. Each year we see more teams using the same bullet as Richman openly shares all his teams reloading information with other coaches. Richman shares in one of SASP's founding principles that it is not a win at all cost program, but instead a youth development program. Richman shares how



LCAS at Nationals

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he succeeds with his team, so all coaches can help their athletes perform to their highest potential.

Recently I asked Coach Dave Richman what he has been doing to have such great success with his team. He explained that each year he calculates what he feels the time his squad will need to attain to win another championship. He explained that every year the athletes in SASP are getting faster and faster so if you just try to match your previous years' time you will be behind. I'm not sure how the coach who is also a public-school teacher calculates that improvement, but from his success he obviously has the right formula worked out. Richman explained after estimating that time, he evaluates each athlete's abilities and then works with each athlete on the skills he finds that will improve their individual performance. He tells his athletes not to compare themselves to others on the team or

try to shoot to their speed. He tells them that his goal for them is to shoot to the best of their ability and shoot their personal bests, while working on continuous improvement.

I asked Coach Richman what he does to keep his athletes practicing and engaged since Wisconsin has the challenge of practicing in the cold Winter, making it difficult for kids, and in Fall the sun goes down early in Wisconsin. Richman advised that when the berms freeze to the point they can no longer practice safely, he moves his team indoor and they dryfire practice in a heated garage. He stated that his athletes are dedicated and practice in the bitter Wisconsin cold, he just shortens practices to protect his athletes from frostbite. He shared some photos with me from that week's practice. Due to how early the sun goes down, Richman brings his generator to the range and sets up lights so that they can practice

in the dark. For added safety, the athletes wear glow stick necklaces so that all athletes can be seen on the range. I also noticed when attending one of his practices that there is no down time on his bays. Instead of having athletes sitting around while working with live fire with one athlete, Richman lines his athletes up on the shooting line so that while one athlete is live firing the other athletes are air gunning and dryfiring so that even though they are not shooting, they are still getting training time and repetitions in. Richman also takes advantage of his very involved parents who are registered assistant coaches and parent volunteers. They assist at practices to keep as many athletes engaged in training as possible. With the hard work and dedication of the Lake Country Action Shooters athletes, there is a chance 2019 could find them on the podium for their fifth Senior Centerfire championship.



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What Do I Get?

as a

Part of the Scholastic Action Shooting Program

By Gary Weisbaum



Coach Tina Sturz of the Blue Hills Shooting Stars in WI runs the timer as Remington Ladd competes in rimfire rifle.

Friends and relatives often ask me why I work with and support the Scholastic Shooting Sports Foundation and their Scholastic Clay Target

(SCTP) and Scholastic Action Shooting (SASP) programs. Most of my oldest friends do not shoot and therefore cannot understand my passion for shooting sports and why I believe youth participation in these programs is so valuable to the development of responsible adults.

In SASP, students starting at age ___ through college can participate in SASP pistol and rifle disciplines. The program goals, “teach the safe and responsible handling and use of firearms, provide a supportive team-based environment using shooting sports as the catalyst for positive life lessons, and to introduce young shooters to a sport that can be enjoyed for a lifetime” are practiced without reservation by every coach, volunteer, and official involved with the program.

However the “real impact”, the “you know you are doing the right thing” feeling you get in your heart and mind comes when you watch any of the SASP Youth Shooters at a match. Here’s why!



Head Coach Mike Ditscheit of the Union Grove Broncos of WI watches as Alexis Fletcher competes.





Bailey Lueders, of Arnold, Missouri, Junior Shooters, shooting centerfire pistol.

1) Long before the match, your child had committed to this decide they were willing discipline to learn how to do before. They had to listen about how to think about

2) SASP match, you will notice quickly how diverse the young adults are. They are not all tall, not all broad shouldered, some wear glasses, some have long hair, some have short hair, and some have no hair at all. Some teams are made up of all boys, some of all girls, but most have both.

3) If you engage the team shooters, you will find something you seldom see. These young people are polite, they smile, they are excited to talk about what they are doing and why they are doing it. They live and feel the responsible, respectful, competitive, engaged, and thought provoking sport they are participating in.

4) And...they want to get better! They want to learn, listen, practice, and practice some more to get better at this special sporting challenge they have chosen. Isn't that what we all hope our kids will do to meet the challenges they will confront in all aspects of their adult lives.

to make a personal program. He or she had to put forth the energy and something they had never done and learn from adults and teammates something new. And they did it.

If you look around at the team shooters at an

made up of all boys, some of all girls, but most have both.

3) If you engage the team shooters, you will find something you seldom see. These young people are polite, they smile, they are excited to talk about what they are doing and why they are doing it. They live and feel the responsible, respectful, competitive, engaged, and thought provoking sport they are participating in.

4) And...they want to get better! They want to learn, listen, practice, and practice some more to get better at this special sporting challenge they have chosen. Isn't that what we all hope our kids will do to meet the challenges they will confront in all aspects of their adult lives.

If you want to see for yourself, visit the www.sssfonline.org website, click on the SASP header and scroll to the event calendar. Find a local, state, regional or national event in your area and go see for yourself. And bring your kids! They will quickly see this is a challenge they want to engage! ©



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SHINES

SMHS Shooting Team SHINES at National Event

By Amy Partain



Kaden Westfall and a lady junior, Winners of the Last Competitor Standing event.

COLORADO SPRINGS. When Kaden Westfall's family left Colorado Springs on July 13 to drive to Ohio for the 2018 Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) and Scholastic Action Shooting Program (SASP) National Championships, he was hoping that he and his fellow St. Mary's High School teammates would have a good experience at their first nationals. What he wasn't expecting was for anyone on the team to come home with medals. When the team headed home a few days later, two of the St. Mary's squads were

second in the nation and Westfall was a national champion.

Westfall, a junior at St. Mary's High School, earned the title of national champion in handicap division of the trap competition after hitting 186 of 200 targets from the 25-yard line. Two of St. Mary's squads took second place in the junior varsity divisions of both handicap and doubles competitions. The handicap squad was made up of senior Cole Ciccarelli and juniors Mark Rysavy, Matt Raskob, Brian Sorensen, and Westfall — and missed a tie for first

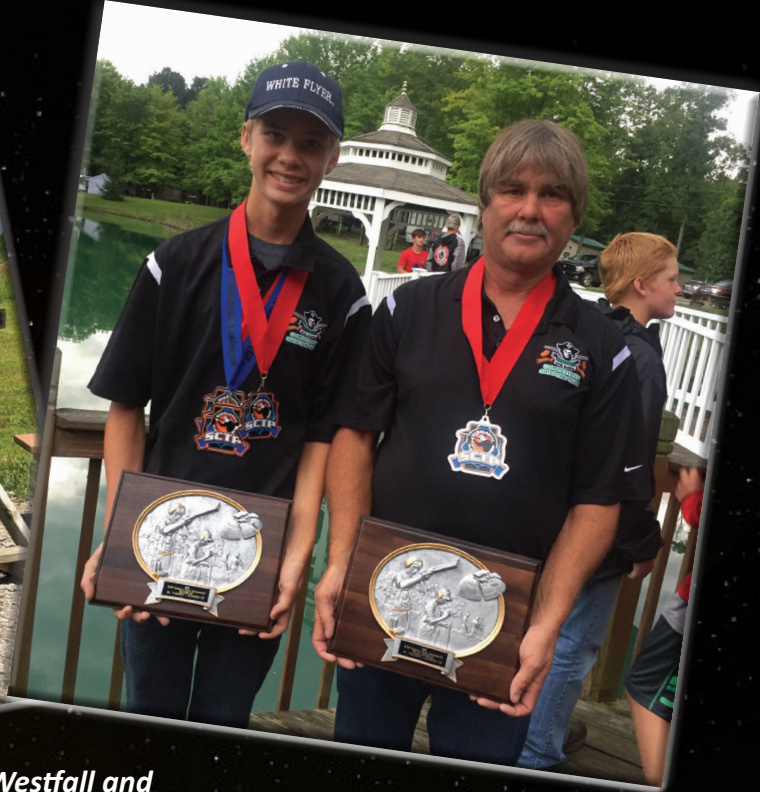
place by only one target. Teammates competing on the doubles squad were Ciccarelli, Rysavy, Raskob, junior Andrew Sorensen, and Westfall.

"I had no expectations for nationals," Westfall said. "We were happy to be there, and while I didn't think we would win anything, I didn't share those thoughts with my teammates because anything is possible. We prayed and asked for help to shoot our best, and God was on our side."

Trap shooting includes different disciplines. Singles are shot 16 yards behind the trap house, with a squad of five shooters each shooting five targets before rotating to the next shooting station until the squad has rotated through all five stations for a total of 25 possible hits. Handicap is similar to singles but is designed so that shooters of different abilities could compete against each other fairly. In handicap the shooters stand farther away, between 17 and 27 yards, from the trap house, depending on their handicap score. Doubles are shot from 16 yard line but two targets are thrown at the same time, one to the left and one to the right. The shooter takes shots, one at each target and is scored based on the number hit. Normally a round is five pairs shot from each of the five shooting positions for a total of 50 targets per round.

At nationals, the St. Mary's competitive shooting team competed in all of the trap disciplines, skeet and sporting clays. According to Westfall's mom, Kim, more than 27 states had teams competing at nationals, resulting in more than 2,700 competitors, 7,000 entries in events, and one million targets shot.

While his hunting background may have helped him as he started competitive shooting, Westfall said target shooting is totally different from hunting. Whether it is the product of being the coach's son or his excelling in the sport, Westfall has become a leader



Kaden Westfall and his father, Coach John Westfall, proudly showing the teams 2nd place trophies in jv handicap and doubles.



Unknown junior lady, Larry Potterfield, Brenda Potterfield, unknown junior, and Kaden Westfall. Shooting with the Potterfields, was one of the highlights of Kaden's first year competing.



on the competition shooting team. Once he is finished practicing, he goes around helping and encouraging his teammates.

“While there is an individual part to competitive shooting, it is a team sport not just an individual sport,” Westfall said. “Everyone can get better and each of us on the team can give input on how others can work to get better.”

Westfall’s teammates credit him with helping them individually and the team overall improve. Cassidy Sorensen, a junior, said that when the team was just starting last fall, Westfall picked up everything quickly and was able to help his teammates better understand what they needed to do.

“Kaden has helped me improve my shooting performances in many ways,” she said. “Whenever I have a question he almost always has an answer for me, whether it is about how to clean the gun or where my hold points should be. He always has a little tidbit of information that helps me, like how to adjust to the wind blowing from behind or coming

right at me.”

Teammate Cole Ciccarelli, a senior, has found participating in competitive shooting very rewarding and also credits Westfall with helping him improve his shooting. Ciccarelli was a member of both St. Mary’s squads who placed second at nationals.

“Kaden helps me not give up when I’ve had a bad day,” Ciccarelli said. “And he helps coach the kids who are struggling.”

Westfall played baseball his freshman year at St. Mary’s, but he hadn’t grown up playing traditional high school sports and struggled to find his place in the high school community. The competitive shooting team has provided that place, not just for Westfall, but for other St. Mary’s students who aren’t drawn to or physically cannot participate in the other sports or activities offered by St. Mary’s.

“Competitive shooting gives a lot of students a chance to excel in a sport when they may not be able to compete

in other sports,” Westfall said. “With competitive shooting, everyone gets equal playing time and an equal chance to win.”

Westfall has seen other benefits from competitive shooting as well, including increased confidence, a building up of his faith, and better focus on academics. He said that focusing to hit targets has helped him to literally focus better on his school work.

Registration is now open for the 2018-2019 St. Mary’s competitive shooting team. Westfall said he knows that sometimes it is hard for students to try something new, but hopes that interested students will give it a try. When July 2019 rolls around, Westfall’s expectations for the team and for nationals are going to be higher.

“I expect us to do as well at nationals next year, if not better. We accomplished a lot in our first year, but we can only go up from here,” he said.

(Amy G. Partain is director of communications for St. Mary’s High School) ©



St. Marys athletes participating in the filming of “One Last Shot.”



Matt Raskob and Kaden Westfall celebrating their 16th birthdays together at Nationals.





**Junior Skeet,
Women medalists:
Katie Jacob, Gold;
Gracin Anderson,
Silver; Karsyn Ross,
Bronze
(Photo courtesy of
USA Shooting)**



Packing guns and homework, ten members of the SCTP National Team made their way to Colorado Springs last week for USA Shooting's 2018 National Championships. Meredith Bernau, Heather Broski, Emilio Carvalho, Monica Dale, Peter Meola, Jack Olsen, and Matt Wells were on the ground first for the International Trap championships. The weather was mostly cooperative, and the trap scores reflected accordingly.

Heather Broski, finishing third in the Junior Women's final, attained a spot on the U.S. National Junior Team and will now wear a National Junior team vest. "The intent of the SCTP National Team is to prepare these athletes to take the next step to the national level. Heather has done that. I'm very proud of her performance in this match," declared head coach Terri DeWitt. Emilio Carvalho posted a solid performance as well, narrowly missing the Junior Men's final by one target. He did, however, take home a silver medal in men's Class A.

In what came as no surprise to Skeet competitors, the weather took a dramatic turn for the worse during the second half of the competition. Gracin Anderson, Erin Lokke, and AJ Nomina battled for four days

SCTP National Team Members Compete at USA Shooting Nationals

By Terri Dewitt

through gusting winds, freezing rain, and falling snow. "Even though conditions were tough, we adapted and fought through challenges that were not normal. I learned a lot this week and plan to use this experience to train for future events," pledged Lokke.

In spite of the weather conditions, Gracin Anderson secured herself a National Junior Team vest with her silver medal finish in junior Women's Skeet. AJ Nomina and Erin Lokke both took home Skeet medals as well - Nomina a bronze in men's Class B and Lokke a silver in women's Class B. ©



**Junior Trap Women
medalists: Victoria
Hendrix, Gold;
Ryann Phillips,
Silver; Heather
Broski, Bronze
(Photo courtesy of
USA Shooting)**



I Didn't Sign On to Coach a Mom's Class!

By Al Chickerno



What do you do as an SCTP coach? Nationals is done, the post season shoots are over, you have had your awards picnic, you have just finished a full week of Rookie Camp for new recruits, and now you are looking forward to a few months of break time to hunt, relax, spend more time with your own family and recharge before the season begins again. Just when you think you're done, a couple of mothers on the team ask, "Coach, will you teach us to shoot Trap? It should have been easy to find a gracious way to bow out, but the Central Falcons Shooting Team in Southern Wisconsin is as much a family as it is a team, and everyone in the family is important, so you say, "Sure!" Before you know it, the tell-a-mom network starts to light up and soon you have 16 moms who want lessons.

My father-in-law had a favorite saying, "When you're stuck, stay stuck," or in other words, embrace the circumstance. Fortunately, I had five brothers on our coaching staff who agreed to embrace the circumstances with me and so our first (likely) annual Moms' Shooting Class was born. Eight ladies eventually were able to attend our classes which gave us a very favorable student-to-coach ratio that helped to

accelerate learning and success.

When we polled the ladies as to what they wanted from the experience, they gave us some very reasonable answers. Some wanted to understand more about what their children were going through, and others felt that if they were going to spend hours at shooting ranges with their sons and daughters, they would rather shoot with them than stand and watch. Others just wanted to understand what we were talking about.

Things started slowly the first week where safety was addressed, shooting fundamentals were discussed, and guns were checked and fitted. In some cases, the ladies brought their own guns. Others had no gun to use or the one they brought was inappropriate, so we paired them with team guns and, in some cases, guns personally owned by the coaches. Our first range time saw lots of empty holes in the sky with the ground breaking most of the targets, but by the end of that first session, everyone had a proper stance and mount, and none were afraid of their gun or its recoil.

The second session brought much more success with all ladies breaking targets and some truly proficient clay busters. All were delighted with their progress and all had so much fun that

they didn't want the experience to end. Now they are working on a ladies-only league at our home Trap range so they can keep the party going. One coach each week will commit to be there to pull, score, and offer help.

So was it worth it? Some would say "If Mama ain't happy, no one is happy." But that doesn't begin to describe the benefits. These ladies have one more thing in common with their sons and daughters, and one more activity to share. They are glowing with appreciation for the coaches who shared their time in the program, and their commitment to the team and its efforts overall has been cemented. Two of these ladies have expressed an interest in certifying as SCTP coaches. The others all want to sign on as adult volunteers, helping the coaches on the field. The Falcon coaches all had a refreshing and fun experience working with students who were hungry to learn and eager to make necessary changes. In all, I'd say it was more than worth it, and in fact, it's the kind of program that all great teams should offer to enhance team commitment and support. Believe me, the Central Falcons will be more than happy to do it again. ©

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Mental Management in Practice

What Do You Believe?

By Al Chickeneo

When you prepare to shoot at a target, what do you believe? When I shoot clay targets, I believe that the target will break. I believe that nothing and no one other than myself can have an affect over my shot. I believe that what I have done in the past has prepared me to be successful at this moment. Perhaps you are thinking that I must have had a great deal of success to feel so confident and in control. In a certain sense I have, but it's not what you think.

Much is known about mental management or "the mental game" in sport. Several authors have written numerous books and articles describing how we use our mental processes to perform. Most of them say the same or similar things, but, in my experience, far too few younger athletes are able to put this knowledge into practice. Perhaps they (you) need a more practical guide to mental management.

No matter what they call it, most experts agree that our conscious mind is a uni-tasker (to borrow a term from Alton Brown). We can only "think" about one thing at a time. That's good when we are learning new facts or analyzing difficult problems, but shooting requires us to do several things at once. To shoot a clay target, for instance, we must determine the speed and direction of the target, estimate the approximate amount of forward allowance, move our gun to that projected forward allowance, maintain our mount and swing, and pull the trigger at just the right moment. Do these things one at a time and the ground will be breaking the targets before you do. We need our mental multi-tasker, the subconscious mind, if we want to break a flying target or speed shoot a group of steel targets. We also need our

conscious mind to stay out of the way while our subconscious performs these tasks.

There are two problems with this plan, first, our conscious mind doesn't like giving up control, and our subconscious mind needs a way to learn how to do what we want it to do. The only way to teach your subconscious to do anything is to "see" and "feel" the task done correctly over and over again so that your brain and your body "remember" it exactly. You can't just "talk" to your subconscious like you do when you train your conscious mind to remember things because the subconscious doesn't really understand words, it only understands pictures and feelings.

When we practice, we try to do everything right every time. We show our subconscious plenty of successful attempts. Ideally, we also do all we can to ignore or forget the unsuccessful attempts so the subconscious doesn't remember them and get confused. But what if we could be certain that every attempt resulted in the perfect shot? What if we could practice hundreds of those perfect shots every day? Imagine how well trained our subconscious would be then. Imagine being able to practice several of those perfect shots before we compete. Imagine being able to rehearse a perfect performance any time you did anything, like making a presentation in class, or playing in a recital, or shooting in a tournament.

You actually can experience that perfect performance any time you want, because, your subconscious can be fooled. Your subconscious mind can't tell the difference between daydreaming and actually experiencing, so every time you imagine something your



subconscious experiences it the same as if it were real. The more complete the mental picture, with sights, sounds, smells, and physical feelings, the more "real" the experience becomes. Some folks like to experience the event as if they were watching themselves in a movie, others imagine themselves actually performing.

When I rehearse to shoot clay targets, I feel the weight of the gun in my

hands, the comb against my cheek. I hear myself call "Pull!" As I look past my barrel at the clay target flying through the air, I let my eyes focus on the leading edge and my hands move the gun into position. I feel my finger pull the trigger and I hear the report of the gun. I shudder from the recoil as I watch the target disintegrate into a cloud of orange dust. Finally, I enjoy the moment as the scorer puts one more X on my scorecard.

Olympic athletes call this type of purposeful daydreaming "visualization" and it is commonly used by elite athletes in all sports. Sometimes the camera catches them doing it. Have you ever seen a downhill skier just before he or she gets into the gate for a race? What do you suppose they are

subconscious what to do before you perform. You can even visualize to "reset" yourself after missing a target or making a mistake.

When you visualize, in addition to fooling your subconscious, another important thing happens. You increase your confidence in yourself. You see success and you see yourself as successful. A confident individual performs at his or her best. Those who lack confidence perform down to their expectations. You have a better chance of succeeding if you believe you can succeed, and after so much visualized success why wouldn't you feel confident? It's that confidence that allows your conscious mind to give up control and remain in the background, while your subconscious is doing its job

without interference.

My teacher said, "Practice makes perfect." She was wrong. Only perfect practice makes perfect. The easiest way to efficiently get enough perfect practice to improve quickly is to visualize a perfect performance over and over again. Perfect practice leads to confidence and a well-trained subconscious that will "remember" how to perform when you need it to. This allows the conscious mind to stay out of the way. Just like anything else, the more you practice visualizing perfection the more proficient you will become and the easier it will be for you to visualize on command. In other words, go forth, become a legend in your own mind. It could lead you to a legendary performance.

Al Chickerneo is the former Head Coach of the 2016 National Champion Central Falcons Trap, Skeet, & Sporting Clays Teams. He is a certified NSCA Level 1 Sporting Clays Instructor and an NRA/USAShooting Level 2 Shotgun Coach. He has coached in the SCTP for 10 years. ☺



doing with their eyes closed and their body swaying back and forth as if they are skiing the course? You can shoot whole tournaments in your head while waiting to fall asleep. You can practice free throws, or play your recital piece perfectly over and over again. You could even shoot targets during a history lecture, although I wouldn't advise it. You can visualize to practice, and you can visualize to remind your



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By Tom Wondrash
SCTP National Director

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The SSSF or Scholastic Shooting Sports Foundation now implements this program.

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