

The New **Gun Week** *Informing Gunowners Since 1966*

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A black and white photograph of a man in tactical gear, including a helmet with an American flag patch and goggles, aiming a shotgun. The background is a plain wall.

**Three shotgun styles
for personal defense**

**'Fast & Furious'
probe to continue
despite transfers**

**Fox News reports
'grenade walking'
linked to ATF, DoJ**

FN-NRA sponsor new rifle match at Camp Perry high power phase

by Dick Jones

Photos by Michelle Cerino

The realization came slowly. My first impression was there was a mistake. Then I realized what had happened and I began to clap loudly. My grandson, Phoenix Hutchins, had just won the Junior Class in the inaugural National Rifle Association (NRA) National Defense Match at Camp Perry, OH.

I'd been pretty certain, based on the standings after the 300-yard line, he was in the top three. I also knew he'd done really well on the 400-yard line and I'd



Colton Cerino and his FN SCAR clean the 300 yard line.

figured he'd get to second place, provided we made a good wind call at 500 yards; but the storm had dashed those chances. It would have taken a disaster on the 400- and 500-yard lines for him to have overtaken his friend, Colton Cerino.

Seconds after Phoenix Hutchins was called out as the winner of the Junior Class, it came to me that Colton had been moved up into the regular classes. It turned out Colton, son of Top Shot I competitor Chris Cerino, had won the Optical Class and finished fifth overall, a remarkable accomplishment consider-

match was no disappointment.

One of the most impressive things about this match was the electronic target system used. Developed by SIUS and marketed in the US by Shot Response, the system requires no marking, pasting, or scoring of the actual target. To begin each string, the shooter confirms his name on the screen and pushes any button to begin time. The scoring system records every shot both in location on the target and time received. As soon as the last shot is fired, the computer updates the score sheet board



NRA's Trey Tuggle, the designer of the National Defense Match, explains the NDM target dubbed by some as the Simon target after the '80s computer game.

the completion of the string, the display reflects the shooter's shots and any penalties incurred for misses. This is the scoring system of the future here and now.

Another innovative feature of the match is that a whole new target has been designed for this match consisting of five reduced size tombstone targets on one 4 x 4 sheet. The five targets are in different colored backgrounds to allow the match director to give the shooter a firing sequence that may change at every stage. A representative stage might be one shot on each target strong hand and one each weak hand with a firing sequence of red, white, blue, green and yellow. If the shooter shoots the targets in the wrong sequence, the shot is a miss. If the shooter doesn't get back

focused not on the color of the target but on the pattern required to shoot the targets in proper sequence, feeling it was easier to memorize the fire pattern rather than remembering the color sequence. This played out very well with an interview I had at the Bianchi Cup with Iain Harrison, the eventual winner of the National Defense Match. In the Bushmaster ACR side event I watched Harrison shoot 30 shots through three different rifles 10 yards apart at 17

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ing this was officially the 14-year-old first rifle match. Phoenix, Colton, Chris, and I had practiced shooting the long range stages and gotten zeros just two days before and I knew Colton could shoot. What was remarkable was his coolness under pressure.

We were on Petrarca Range, for the awards ceremony of the first ever National Defense Match (NDM) and, while I hadn't shot as well as I'd have liked to, my grandson winning his first rifle match in a national event more than compensated for my poor performance. I've been excited about this new shooting event since I first got an email from Trey Tuggle at the National Rifle Association (NRA) inviting me to compete in the official debut of NRA's new tactical rifle discipline, and the



The close, fast targets were a challenge for a guy who's used to rapid fire being ten shots in 60 seconds. Once shooters got past 200 yards, author enjoyed the advantage of years of reading wind and it paid off.

location of the six shooters in the line. The shots appear in live time as if you were watching the target in a scope. At

on sequence, each subsequent shot is also a miss.

Match Director Tuggle said the reason for the target sequencing was to encourage shooters to think while shooting. I



FNH's Tommy Thacker on the line.



Iain Harrison "Hoses It" at the 15 yard line.

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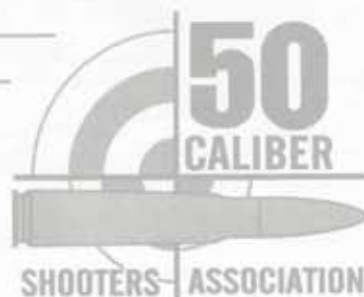
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New National Defense Match tests young and veteran shooters

(Continued from Page 11)
different targets in just 19.5 seconds.

Harrison explained the key to shooting multiple targets with this kind of speed was to memorize the pattern and simply execute the envisioned pattern. Apparently his method works because Harrison had less penalty points than anyone else in the match acquiring just 14 seconds of penalty points during the entire 134 shots fired. The next best performance at avoiding penalties was Edward Altmeyer, the eventual Limited Class winner, who accumulated 32 seconds of penalty points.

No first-ever match goes without a hitch and the hitch in the Inaugural National Defense Match was competitors cross-firing. Other than a loss of points, there was no penalty incorporated into the match for cross-fires and the frequency of cross-fires slowed the match since the target fired on had to shoot a re-fire. The speed of the match coupled

are at 200, 300, 400, and 500 yards, requiring not only the ability to shoot, but a working knowledge of the rifle's trajectory and the ability to read and deal with the effects of wind.

In this the first NDM, we didn't quite get to find out just how much the longer range parts of the match would affect the scores because of a front that moved over Northern Ohio on the second day, when we were just getting ready to move back to the 500-yard line. I believe the 500-yard line wouldn't have affected the final winners but I also firmly believe it would have impressed the importance of precision marksmanship skills. Both Phoenix and I were gaining position in the overall standings with every yard line as we got further back.

The first yard line that required wind doping skills was the 300. At the 200-yard line, a reasonable group that was within three minutes of the correct wind call could still have been clean, but 300



The "R2" units instantly displayed hits and penalties

to the line, the wind fell off and I had him take two clicks off just before he shot. He cleaned both strings as well and we both crawled up the results screen in the trailer. I noticed several great groups just outside the target. If you want to do well in the full course version of this match, you'll have to learn how to deal with wind.

In an earlier story, I described the DPMS Prairie Panther rifle I chose for the match and discussed my scope choice of the Nikon M223 2-8. I think my equipment choice was perfect for the optical class. In practice and zeroing as well as in the match, the rifle performed

guy on the line and one of only a few who aren't into shooting fast. My High Power skills were enough of an asset to move me up into a respectable showing by the end and I feel I'd have gained a few more places on the 500-yard line with probably more experience beyond 300 yards than anyone on the line. In all, this was a fun match that's a real test of a broad range of shooting skills. A match like this can be shot at any level the competitor wishes to aspire to and I aspire to work on my fast shooting skills and make a better showing next year. The best part of the match is that this kind of shooting is fun for my grandson and a

Competitor's Comments on new National Defense Match

Iain Harrison, Overall and Open Winner and Top Shot 1 Winner

"I think this match had a lot of potential. It crosses over between the action shooting disciplines and the regular high power across the course shooting. I think if we can bridge that and bring new shooters into the fold it will do the NRA matches a lot of good. The speed side is where you can make up early ground but the long range side is where the match is won or lost. Having said that, I just brought my regular three gun AR 15. I think if I came back next year to shoot the match I'd want a higher power optic on board."

Colton Cerino, 5th Overall, First Optic

"This is my first rifle match but the match is new so it's everybody's first time. This is my third match, one in Michigan, the Bianchi Cup but this was my first rifle match. I'm using a FN SCAR. I have about 1,000 rounds through it, and it runs and shoots great. I'm using a Super Sniper 1-4 illuminated mil reticle scope and it's worked perfect."

Chris Cerino, Cerino Training and Top Shot 1 runner up

"I couldn't be more proud of Colton even if he did outshoot me. There's not a doubt in my mind that this is one of the proudest days of my life. I'm so proud of him and his performance. I know I trained him well but he has to apply what he learns. He had good training and good equipment and he's surrounded by really great people in the folks we've been shooting with. I think that's the key to his success."

Ken Pfau, Sr. Vice President of Sales and Marketing at FNH USA



"We cover three gunners and we wanted to get people involved in the A1 or sporting carbine part of shooting and when Tommy and I first heard Trey's description of the match we thought it wouldn't have enough action to be fun. We didn't think it would be fast enough or hard enough. He brought us out to do a practice run and after the first stages with us messing up missing targets laughing at each other, by the end of the day we were giggling like little girls, going we thought, we've got to go back and do this again."

Tommy Thacker, Director of Product Management with FNH USA. 2nd place Open

"This is a great format. It's a way for guys to take the gun that's in the closet, shoot a match and put themselves and their equipment to the test. The format is great; it reminds me of the Bianchi Cup with rifles. It really tests your abilities beyond that 100-yard mark. Anybody can shoot a hundred, but when you get to 300, 400 and 500 yards, it changes things. I'm using an FNH SCAR 68 with Leupold optics 2.5 to 8 Mark IV, and a Leupold Delta Point for close range. I have a Surefire suppresser Geissele trigger with a nice 4-pound break. I have a few advantages with equipment."

Jim Clark, Clark Custom Guns and Three Gun Competitor

"Being the first one, I'm sure they'll tweek the course of fire some but this has been great. It's been a combination of accuracy and speed and so far, it's been fairly level for both schools. You have to have both to win this match."

with shooters moving from one side of a barricade to the other contributed to the problem but there are solutions currently being discussed to correct the problem.

At ranges beyond 30 yards, the targets are simple tombstone targets and while the match gets simpler, the shooting gets progressively more difficult as the shooter moves back. The last four stages

was another matter. We were dealing with a 10:30 wind at about six miles an hour but the wind changed over to almost 9:00 at times. I was second relay and cleaned the first stage sitting behind a barricade. The position was steady and I had a reasonable group centered on the target. The next stage was prone and my group was about six inches across and perfectly centered. When Phoenix went



Trey Tuggle presents author's grandson and Junior Winner, Phoenix Hutchins, with his trophy rifle.



Camp Perry has been about friendship, fun, and shooting for a hundred years and it still is. Friendly competitors at the NDM are, left to right: Colton Carino, his dad, Chris Carino, author Dick Jones, and his grandson, Phoenix Hutchins.

flawlessly, shooting consistently sub-minute with the Black Hills 77-grain match ammunition. The trigger was great, the extended charging handle was an asset, and in spite of the high number of rounds due to Phoenix and I both shooting the same rifle, performance was flawless. We shot on consecutive relays which didn't allow the rifle time to cool, but if this had an affect on accuracy, I certainly didn't see it. We continued to shoot better as the match demanded more accuracy in spite of the high number of rounds.

The Nikon scope also gets kudos and I believe there could be no better scope for this kind of shooting regardless of money. The graduated Spot On elevation knob allowed me to simply dial on the elevation at each yard line and the windage adjustments were repeatable and inspired confidence. I think I chose the right version with the 2-8 but I wonder if the 1-4 might have been a little quicker at the shorter targets. The 8x magnification certainly was a boon on the 400-yard line.

We used an ATI folding front hand grip on our rifle and it certainly benefited our groups in the longer prone positions. The first stage at 300 yards was sitting behind a barricade from a chair and Phoenix cleaned it. When he shot the next stage in the prone position, I feared he was rushing his shots because they were coming about a second apart. When we looked at the target screen on our shooting position, he had a tight, well centered group. I asked how he shot them so fast and he said, "I lined up the first shot and when the rifle came back down, it was in the center. I just kept shooting until I had shot them all." The front grip served like a monopod and his position must have been perfect allowing him to shoot a clean score at 300 yards in under 10 seconds.

At almost 60, I was the second oldest

great way for us to compete together, one of the best virtues you can ask of any shooting game.

EDITOR'S NOTE: A report on the author's selection of equipment and practice for the new NDM appeared in the Sept. 1, 2011 issue of *Gun Week*.

Issa in media fight with New York Times

Rep. Darryl Issa (R-CA), the influential chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, gotten into war of words with *The New York Times* recently, and neither powerful interest appears to be backing down, according to the *San Diego Union-Tribune*.

Issa had been the subject of a front-page article in August in which *The Times* raised questions about whether he had used his official powers to enhance his personal interests. Some observers, however, felt *The Times* was striking back at Issa for his committee's probe of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) flawed Operating Fast and Furious which has embarrassed the Obama Administration.

The story questioned Issa's ties to satellite radio company Sirius and the former investment house Merrill Lynch, and his participation in federal policymaking affecting those companies.

Almost immediately, Issa disputed the premise of the article and took issue with specific elements of the report. The initial response noted the story misreported the value of Issa's holdings as "multibillion-dollar" rather than "multimillion-dollar," an error *The Times* later corrected.

The *Union-Tribune* sought Issa's side of the story and his staff released a seven-page rebuttal outlining 13 separate problems with *The Times* story and demanding a front-page retraction.