

The 2022 Sonoran Desert Grand Prix

Match Report

March 4-6th

We celebrated yet another fantastic year with a smooth-flowing match, great weather, and good shooting this weekend.

Every match starts with months of preparation. This occasion was no different from before. The Match Director, Garrett Kwakkestein, designed the course layout and oversaw the event.

Stephen Kuntz prepared the targets several weeks prior. He headed up the target maintenance and operations. A Saturday a few weeks back, he spent all day stripping every target and ensuring perfect operation. Stephen took some of the targets home to do service and maintenance repair. They were stripped, painted, tested, and lubed.

Days before setup, Lauren Parsons came out and assisted in course maintenance. We ensured that every target was visible from 15" off the ground. We confirmed there would be no issues, from low shooters to tall shooters on buckets.

This year we decided to expand the match from 13 lanes to 15 lanes. In addition, the pistol course was omitted this year. The Match was a 30 target, 60 shot match on each course, totaling 120 shots for the event. In previous years, we took the shooting pads and made each pad either the red side or a yellow side the entire course length. This time, we changed the format a bit and split the range as a whole into two separate sides for each day instead of intermingling both courses. This brought the lanes closer together and allowed competitors to finish quicker instead of walking the entire length of the course. It also helped our older shooters and those with limited abilities significantly.

The Troyer for the event was 30.6 (without corrections). The Red Course had a Troyer of 32.14, and the Yellow Course a Troyer of 29.06.

We split the competitors into two groups since about half of the signed-up shooters were shooting Hunter. The first group was just the Hunter class, and the second group was WFTF, Open, Unlimited, and the Springers. We assigned the Hunters to the Red Course and all others to the Yellow on Saturday. Then, the following day, we swapped courses for everyone.

On Friday, the check-in was located on the small bore range and was managed by Cheri. She handed out event shirts to the competitors as they checked in. The sight-in course was organized and put together by Allan Surratt. Larry, Chris, Kevin, Mark, Dan, and Stephen

assisted him. We had target lanes set up every 10 feet. We brought in extra target boxes for the 10-yard and 55-yard marks, so shooters could get an accurate distance measurement when the line would get full. When the area opened in the late morning, the winds were pretty strong with gusts up to about 20 miles an hour, making it a challenge for shooters to sight in their rifles. It became almost futile. Those that were patient saw the winds decrease later in the afternoon. However, as luck would have it, the sky opened up, and a little dusting of moisture touched the ground for a few minutes just before the clouds cleared up. As always, this time of year, it almost could be any weather. It could range from ice to 90° temperatures, to winds, rain, etc. It's that time of year when the seasons here are transitioning. This is one of the most spectacular times of the year in the desert. On Saturday, we had overcast skies and temperatures in the upper 50s and warming to the lower 60s, and pretty strong winds ranging from 10 to 15 miles an hour coming from the southeast consistently throughout the shoot. On Sunday, all the clouds burned off, and we had beautiful temperatures ranging from the mid-60s to lower 70s with winds mostly variable, switching throughout the morning from the southeast to the southwest. We couldn't have asked for more excellent weather on Sunday.

On Saturday, we had sight-in from 0700 on the Smallbore range to about 0830. At about 0845, we assembled the competitors for a group picture at the Airgun building. The safety and match-brief lasted until about 0915. By the time we paired up the shooters and sent them on their way, it was about 0930. We had just the right amount of shooters to set everybody up on every other lane.

The course was hot upon arrival, so shooters could start as they arrived. We sent the farther shooters first so everybody would roughly begin simultaneously. The shooters that required accommodations started early so they could get to their lanes at their own pace and not fall behind. Prior to the start, every target was tested in the morning with the AAFTA tester while we pulled the strings. In addition, every target was tested in three locations (top, middle, and bottom of the paddle) when setting up the course a few days prior. We continued the color scheme as was started last year with bright colors on every target. The bright colors helped with target acquisition and helped keep the course flowing. All paddles were painted white. With sunlight reflections from mirror-type paint on the target's backside, it helped to illuminate the paddle. The target colors did not match the course color, which was intentional. We painted all the targets random bright colors, except for a few hand-painted targets from children and ones with 3-D effects on the faceplate such as feathers and fur. The colors and variety kept things interesting. There were no cold lines due to target failures or challenges. On Sunday, a cold line was called because a string got caught in a cactus on the last lane of the day.

During the match on both days, we had a chronograph station set up midway between the Yellow, and Red course, which competitors from both courses filtered through. This was operated by Larry, Allen, Kevin, and Chris and flowed real nicely throughout the weekend. The station included an aquarium to shield the wind for the pellet scale, an AirChrony, and a pellet trap. After a successful test, the competitor received a "Pass" stamp on their

scorecard and a match souvenir sticker for their rifle. For the shooters' convenience, air tanks were stationed at three locations on the course, including at the chrony station. We provided quality snacks during the match on the course. The club provided fruit roll-ups, trail mix, Gatorade, and water.

After the shoot on Saturday, which ended at about 1230, we brought in fine catered dining for the competitors. The selections included chicken marsala, beef burgundy, pesto chicken over tortellini, rice pilaf, rosemary baked potato wedges, fresh vegetables, and garlic breadsticks. The dessert provided was fresh baked cookies. Beverages included the standard soda variety. Thanks to Cheri and Paul for serving the meals.

Due to our compressor being down, Lauren and Greg from AoA took our tanks and the tanks of the shooters to get filled up at the shop overnight and returned them bright and early the next morning.

After eating, the painting team assembled. The team included Garrett, Dan, and Jesse. It's necessary at this range to wind strings for the overnight due to deer and other predatory animals roaming the premises. So we grabbed the drills and started the winding and painting process. After the painting, the team tested all targets once again.

Sunday's match started at 0900. We had one shooter drop out from Saturday's lineup. The course ran flawlessly. There were no target challenges or failures. As discussed earlier, the weather was near perfect.

On Sunday after the shoot, we provided the competitors ice cream before the medal ceremony.

After the match, Greg, Cheri, and Paul tallied up the competitors' cards and verified the accuracy. This is such a vital step as we discover discrepancies in both math and accuracy every year. As in previous years, we utilized a real-time google spreadsheet to display the scores on our website. This was further aided by a QR code that we posted to ease the competitors' ability to find the correct online location of the results. During this time, Andy, the match photographer, displayed the pictures from the weekend on the large screen TVs in the building.

This year it turns out we only had one tie. The tie was for third place in Hunter PCP. The shoot-off was between Scott Hull and Chris Lovett. We set two half-inch targets at 25 yards for a Troyer of 50. Both shooters had three minutes to take the shot. Scott knocked down the target first, and Chris shortly after fired his shot and missed. The sudden death moment propelled Scott to third place. The shoot-off was quick this year as compared to matches in the past.

The ceremony included medals from first to fifth place. Dave Corder from California custom-made the awards using his plasma cutter into unique (and possibly the first-ever in

field target) medals designed so that they could also have a dual purpose use as bottle openers! Ribbon colors represented the standard colors for first to fifth place. We'd like to thank Airguns of Arizona for donating gift certificates for first through third place in Hunter, WFTF, and Open class. Unlimited and Spring received a gift certificate for the highest in their class. Since Unlimited only had three competitors, and the spring piston attaché had only two, of which both were in separate classes. The Main classes received gift certificates for \$100 for first place, \$50 for the second, and \$25 for third. High Spring received \$75, and high Unlimited received \$50.

We received several items for donation and were given away after the ceremony. The first item was a hand-made bombproof aluminum gun tote that could serve double duty as a seat, donated by Dan Johnson (gearhead98@netzero.net). The second item was a gift certificate for a free scope wheel from J D's custom designs scope wheels (<https://jdscustomdesign.com/scope-wheels>). And the third item was a bum bag donated by Tony Turchetta from Panchetta Pen and Knife (and air gun shop) (<https://panchetta.com/air-guns/>) located locally.

Clean-up went quickly. Allen, Garrett, Larry, Kent, and Jesse hit the course to wrap it up. We finished in about an hour and a half.

This concludes yet another successful Grand Prix in the books.

Respectfully submitted,

Garrett Kwakkestein
Match Director.