A lot has changed since the last time a Pyramyd Cup was hosted here in Ohio. When the decision was made to bring the Cup back for 2023, we knew we had quite an undertaking ahead of us. Our focus was not bringing in the absolute most shooters we could possibly get, but instead, to do our very best to run a smooth and fair competition. In addition to Field Target, 100 yard Benchrest and our normal Springer and PCP Gunslynger comps, we added a new division of PCP Gunsylnger which allows the use of pre-loaded magazines. It's fair to say that this will likely be the version of PCP Gunslynger that moves into the future, but more about that later.

In 2019, we ran our first 100 yard BR competition at the Cup. If memory serves, there were around 90 competitors for that event, and Field Target was nearly maxed out around 120 competitors. Bringing the competition back in 2023, certainly shows that interest in long range benchrest has grown, and it also shows that there is still plenty of interest in Field Target and speed shooting as well. Field Target entries took just one week to fill to the 120 shooter maximum. Benchrest took a bit longer, but eventually arrived at our max of 144 competitors for this year's event.

Before we recap the events and their results, I would like to take a moment to highlight those that made the event possible. Emily Phillippi is our Marketing Director, and not only did she organize much of the behind the scenes things that make the Cup run, but she was also in charge of our rebranding project that launched just a day before the Cup started. I cannot fathom how she managed it all, but a huge thanks to her and the entire marketing team for their efforts to make the Cup a success. I also need to thank our President, Val Gamerman. When we decided to bring the Cup back, there was no one more excited than Val. And when it came time to decide how many people were needed to run the event, Val decided to shut down our Tech and Customer Service/Sales departments to provide the personnel needed. All of the help we had this time around certainly created a difference that I noticed during the event, and hopefully shooters noticed as well. And to all of our staff members that came out, worked their hardest and helped make the event run as smoothly as it did, thank you!

Of course, the event would not continue to happen without industry support and there are so many incredible sponsors to thank. Many provided prizes, raffle items, and their personnel to help create an incredible atmosphere for competitors and the public that came out to our demo ranges. There are simply too many to thank here, but you can see them all on our sponsors page. And last, but certainly not least, I need to thank all of you competitors that spent your weekend with us in Marengo, Ohio. Without each and every one of you, the event would not continue. Even after so much time away, I am humbled by your support and I am excited to see how the event will grow into the future.

Last but certainly not least, the Cardinal Shooting Center deserves a big thank you. Not only have they done a tremendous amount of work on the property to host large events like the Cup, but they were eager to get us back onto their event calendar in 2023. Their commitment to improving their facilities was absolutely noticed by all who attended both 2019, and this year. The difference was huge, and I am excited to see how they continue to build out their facilities in

the coming years. We are very fortunate to have such a massive range relatively close by, that is willing and able to host an event like the Cup.

Benchrest

Now, let's talk about the competitions! Starting with the 100 yard Benchrest. With the increase in shooters, we had to build about 30 more target stands to support using the entire shooting line on Cardinal's 100 yard range. We were able to run 48 firing points, which allowed us to run three groups/heats. Each group would shoot both qualifying cards on Friday, and the finals were held Saturday morning. Behind the scenes, our warehouse staff prepped the vast majority of the targets before we came down for the event, over 350 targets to be precise. This included both sight in targets that competitors used on Thursday, Friday and Saturday mornings, and also the competition targets, which were numbered to correspond with the shooters bench number. Benches were drawn during shooter registration, so everything was random.

We were able to start things off on time, and the first few heats ran quite smoothly. In fact, I would say all of the shooting for the qualifying cards ran very well. We were able to mitigate crossfires by the use of a backer card behind the scoring target that allows us to determine if the pellet was fired straight on, or from an angle. This came in handy quite a few times between shooters that unknowingly double shot their targets and a few actual instances of crossfire. As the scores came back after each heat, there were a number of requests for re-scoring of targets. Sadly, we had some inexperienced staff members that made some mistakes while scoring that were not caught before the scores were published. Upon realizing this, our head scoring official took it upon himself to re-score all of the requests personally. In the end, we got through it, but this is one area that I can personally guarantee will be improved for 2024. All I can ask is for shooters to be understanding as this was our first time back in quite a while, and take me at my word that we will do A LOT better next year.

As the day progressed, and shooters got to their second cards, the winds had really begun to speed up on the range. What began the day as mild, 5 mph winds, turned into constant 10-15 mph winds with gusts in the 25mph range. To say it was intense would be an understatement. Shooters scores certainly reflected the change in conditions as most of the second cards were considerably lower than the first cards. There were a handful of shooters that managed to maintain and even improve upon their card one performance despite the increased wind. Another thing we will be changing for next time is a bench rotation between cards 1 and 2. In 2019, the 100 yard range was completely open, without major berms on either side. In the last 4 years though, Cardinal has built berms on both sides of the range as there are now other ranges on both sides, so in an effort to maintain as fair a competition as possible, we will move shooters so everyone experiences different positions for both cards.

The top 12 shooters from each group advanced to the finals, and the benches were assigned completely at random (thanks Google) utilizing the middle 36 benches at the range to avoid the benches nearest to the berms. While shooters had 30 minutes to take their 25 scoring shots, I would say that the vast majority were finished within the first 10 minutes. As it was fairly early,

the wind was not too bad, and if the day prior was any indication, the wind only gets worse as the day goes on. Sure enough, what started as a relatively mild 5mph wind began to kick up into the 10-15 mph range. While I do not have the full breakdown of rifles used built into the scoring document attached below, you will notice that for the finalists, the majority of shooters were using FX rifles. Six shooters that made it to the finals were using the new Karma Red Panda, four shooters were using the Skout Epoch and there were RAW's, RTI's and Daystate's in there as well. The final scores were held until the banquet that evening, where awards and scores were shared. Since we do not have a Pro and Sportsman division at the Cup, we opt to give out more awards for those that make it to the finals. This year, 15 of the 36 shooters in the finals earned awards. You can see the complete finals breakdown, along with the scores for each individual group at the link below. Congratulations to all of those that placed, and to our 2023 100 yard Benchrest Champion, Thayne Simmons. We hope you'll be back to defend your title in 2024.

Gunslynger

Our Gunslynger competition takes place after the Benchrest concludes on Friday. We started around 3:30PM and the festivities ran until roughly 8PM that evening. It's a long day for those participating, but it's also a lot of fun! The gunslynger is essentially a speed silhouette event. Each shooter must knock over 20, 1/10th scale silo's before their opponent does. It's a bracket style, single elimination tournament, with $1000 per division on the line. The targets are placed at 10, 25, 40 and 55 yards. And speaking of the targets, our silhouette banks are made by RX Target Systems, right here in Ohio. These new target banks have a few unique design features that Dave Bitkowski and Bill Rabbitt teamed up to produce. The most important feature is an anti-bounce back function, that prevents targets from bouncing back up once knocked over. Those that were present in 2019 will know what I am talking about, and those who experienced this event for the first time in 2023, will have no idea what I am talking about, because the targets performed flawlessly.

We started with the single load PCP division. In this division, competitors must load each pellet one at a time, so it's not only about shooting fast, but it's about maintaining your composure and executing consistent reloads and taking accurate shots. In years past, this division had been dominated by two individuals, Bill Rabbitt and Greg Sauve. They've had some legendary battles, a few of which you can see on our youtube channel. But this year, a new player entered the mix to challenge for the throne, Nic Gregoris. Nic made quick work of his early round opponents, ending up in a semi-final battle with Dan Putz. Nic was able to make it past Dan, while in the other semi-final, Bill and Greg battled it out. Bill was able to maintain his composure, and cruised past Greg, setting the stage for our third place and finals match ups.

Greg was able to defeat Dan to claim third place and win the $250 prize that comes with it and then attention turned to the finals. Nic and Bill settled into their respective benches. Nic shooting his trusty Air Arms S400 and Bill shooting his Daystate Redwolf. From the very beginning it was clear that Nic was locked in and meant business. He was able to build an early lead and

maintain it to take the victory and the $1000 prize money. Immediately after, competitors had to reset their focus, as the springers were on deck.

We then transitioned to our springer division, which is always fun to see. It's usually very easy to see who the front runners are in this event, and this year was no exception. In 2019, Nic Gregoris took home the title in this division shooting a Beeman R10. This year he broke out an Air Arms Pro Elite (the last break barrel Air Arms produced), and it seemed to be shooting just as well as his R10 had in previous years. He quickly established himself as one to watch, beating John Bagakis and Jeff Swartz en route to the finals. On the other side of the draw, Nathan Thomas was running a Diana 48 at an absolutely stunning pace. These two would be the ones to watch. Gunslynger newcomer Lucas Marusiak (also shooting a Diana 48) cruised through the early rounds before meeting Thomas in the semi-finals. Nathan blistered past him, setting up a match up with Nic in the final, and a third place match between Lucas and Jeff Swartz.

In the third place match, Lucas ran his Diana 48 to the best of his abilities, and managed to secure victory over Jeff, earning the $250 prize. Then came the finals. Both shooters readied themselves, as it was breakbarrel against sidelever. It was clear from the first target that Nathan Thomas was on a mission and would not be denied. Try as he might, Nic simply could not keep up with the blistering pace Nathan set. As the last target fell, Nathan claimed the win and the $1000 prize, Nic settling for second place and $500. And finally, we arrived at the new division for the Gunslynger, our Mag Fed PCP division.

We had over 65 entrants into the Mag-Fed division, easily making it the most popular of the three Gunslynger divisions at this year's Cup. Our rules allow for shooters to use pre-loaded magazines, with their first mag holding no more than 10 pellets, thus forcing a magazine change. Subsequent magazines can be loaded to whatever their maximum capacity is. And we do not restrict the type of magazine used either, so both factory standard and aftermarket mags are allowed. We also allow the use of semi-auto PCP's for this division, though only a few competed.

In the top half of the draw, PJ Clarke and John Bagakis both looked strong from the start. PJ ended up in a quarterfinal battle with close friend John Rupple. He stayed in the zone and ran his Airmaks rifle solidly to overcome the challenge from John. Bagakis squared off with the best performing semi-auto shooter, Ian Mckee. Ian put up a great effort, but had some early hiccups in their match that ultimately put him too far behind John to catch up. But Ian absolutely made the case that semi-auto rifles can and likely will compete at a high level in this competition in years to come.

In the bottom half of the draw, Bill Rabbitt cruised to the semifinals using his Daystate Redwolf and custom made 30 round second magazine. He was so dominant in-fact, that he left one of his early round opponents in near shock when he called "done" after knocking down all 20 targets. His opponent looked up and said "Done with what!?" in disbelief that his opponent could have been finished already. The same thing could have very well happened to Bill's semi-final

opponent, Nic Gregoris, who blazed a trail through his early round opponents. With the semi-finals set, Nic and Bill squared off with Bill edging out Nic by a few targets to advance to the finals. PJ and John Bagakis also ran a tight semi-final, with PJ finishing strong and moving on to the final. You could feel his excitement all the way down the line as he shouted in excitement when he completed his final rack of silhouettes.

In the third place match up, Nic and John squared off. I would say Nic was the favorite in this match-up, but John is a great shooter, and certainly capable of speeding through the targets. Nic meant business however, and plowed through each rack of targets with great precision. Claiming 3rd place, and the $250 prize, I think it would be fair to say that Nic has established himself as a triple threat, placing in all three divisions of the Gunslynger, an absolutely awesome performance. In the final, PJ and Bill squared off and it was quite a showing. Bill jumped to an early lead, and PJ was unable to catch him. Bill snagged the $1000 prize for the Mag-Fed division, and PJ took home $500 and second place.

Field Target

Saturday morning, we turned our attention to the two field target courses, set in the woods. Both courses were built earlier in the week and set to moderate difficulty levels. The blue course was a 32.2T on the Troyer scale (max for a Grand Prix course is 36T) and the Yellow course was a 31.5T. With nearly 120 competitors, it was going to be a long day on the lanes. We had a few early cold lines to deal with some protests, but none were fruitful and all targets were functioning as they should. Both courses ran pretty smoothly, and competitors enjoyed the balanced difficulty the courses presented. There were 5 lanes in the open field section before you entered the woods, and the winds were whipping through all day, making this the most treacherous part of the course.

The bulk of the course in the woods is also quite dark in some areas, this can make range finding very difficult, particularly on dark colored targets. I can say that as a match director and course designer, I was much happier with the courses than I was in 2019. We had about 17 targets on tree stands, which was a big change from 2019 and I hope helped keep shooters entertained and on their toes. It allowed us to create some awesome shots we wouldn't have been able to if we had everything on the ground. As shooters came off of the course, scores were tight near the top. In Hunter PCP, Bill Rabbitt posted a 56 as the high score, while Philip Hepler was one shot behind on 55. In Hunter Piston, Greg Shirhall was two shots ahead of Dan Putz, with a 46. In WFTF PCP, Gerald Long shot a 55 of his own to take a strong lead over Greg Sauve, on 52. Nathan Thomas led WFTF Piston by a few shots with a 40. And in Open PCP, Brian Van Liew held a commanding lead on 55.

On Sunday morning, there was a more serious tone in the air, as you'd expect on the final day of a Grand Prix Field Target match. We had a number of competitors no-show on Sunday morning, which allowed things to run a bit faster for the day. A few cold lines here and there kept the day from running as smoothly as it could have, but overall, it ran pretty well. Both Greg Sauve and Gerald Long posted impressive 59's to maintain their top two positions in the

division, and Brian Van Liew also posted a great 58 to maintain the top spot in Open PCP. But with a few lanes remaining, word made its way through the course that one shooter was still clean, Bill Rabbitt. I've watched Bill post numerous 59's over the past few years, but never run the table and clear it all, but something told me today was the day. It would be fitting for a shooter to clear a course at what will end up being the largest Grand Prix match of the year, just as Jack Harris did in 2019.

When Bill made his way off the course, he confirmed that he was able to hold his nerve and clean it. I gave him a big hug and congratulations, a truly amazing feat and a hell of a way to finish a match. Philip Hepler and Mike Gann found themselves in second and third places respectively to finish out Hunter PCP. We also had a tie in Hunter Piston, with Greg Shirhall and Dan Putz flip-flopping their day one scores. Both shooters elected to flip a coin, versus having a shoot-off, and Dan Putz came away with the win, taking first place. And in WFTF Piston, Nathan Thomas posted a strong 47 to take a dominant first place finish.

We then held our awards ceremony, which is done a little differently than most. Because we award prizes, we take all of the first, second and third place finishers in each division, and allow them to draw numbers from a hat to determine the order in which they get to select their prizes. We had an FX Panthera, an Air Arms TX200,a rifle from Niksan donated by Saber Tactical, multiple optics from Leapers, Hawke and Athlon, a carbon tank and Avenge-X rifle from Air Venturi, H&N pellets and a number of other prizes for shooters to choose from. Awards were handed out, we said our thank-you's and shooters went on their way. Overall, it was a good match and some truly phenomenal shooting took place.

The 2023 Pyramyd Cup was in the books, and it went pretty well for the first time back in four years. No event is ever perfect, and we absolutely have a number of things to improve upon for 2024, but believe me when I say that we fully intend to improve everything we can for next year. I want to again thank all of the sponsors, competitors and our staff for making this event a success coming off of a long time away. I hope to see everyone back in 2024, and keep your eyes peeled on the Pyramyd Air Cup website for updates on dates and events for next year.

Until then, stay safe and shoot straight!