

Several stories to tell from the 2024 Grand American, the heat, temperatures ranging from low to hi 90's during the first week, then seasonal 80's for the remainder, to the newbies from Kenna (not newsbees, which are actually corn flies, but new to the Grand).

With just 10 West Virginia shooters present, nearly half of the WV shooters earned a trophy. The top story has to be when ATA All American - Sub Jr - Ethan Ferris, blasted a 99 from the back fence in Event 19, the Challenger Ammunition Handicap... but wait, Ethan's on the 26, or was. In Event 13 the Blaser Handicap, Ferris broke a 98, enduring a shoot-off for Sub Jr Runner-up with two other Sub Jr's to get to the back fence. Now back to Event 19 in only his second 27 yard start Ethan breaks a 99 and shot off with two ATA All Americans, Curtis Lunsford and Patrick Lamont, dispensing Lunsford in the first round, Ethan dropped one and was Sub Jr. Champion.



Ethan and Pat Lamont after the shoot-off.

Most shooter's goal is the 27 yard line, some never make it, Ethan Ferris made it in addition to nearly completing one leg of the Grand Slam at fourteen years old!

We wondered who was the youngest ever, as well as, the youngest WV to make the ATA 27 yard line. I researched the youngest person ever to attain this achievement through 1997 who was Richard E. Macintosh on March 15, 1997. Macintosh was 11 years 9 Months and 22 days old. For the record, Ethan was 14 years 5 months and 11 days old. So far my research has not uncovered a younger WV 27 yarder than Ethan. I've asked Elissa at Trap & Field for any information in the archives. Elissa advised they will look through their records adding "Congratulations to Ethan on his performance at the Grand".

I had a chance to talk to Ethan during the Meet the All-Americans Reception, his accomplishments are listed below:

Event 3 Little Egypt Golf Cars Doubles Class B Champion 98

Event 12 Graf & Sons Doubles Class B Third 97

Event 13 Blaser Handicap Sub Jr Runnerup 98

Event 17 Wenig Doubles Sub Jr Runnerup 98

Event 19 Challenger Ammunition Handicap Sub Jr Champion 99

During AIM Week

Annie Oakley 2nd Place Sub Jr



WV ATA Delegate, Bob Harden presented Ethan a 27 yard pin for his accomplishment.

Other Grand Winners:



First time Grand shooter, Mikel Boone, was in awe of the Grand as well... Grandiose, the grounds, the vendors of the largest trap shoot in the world. Mikel shot with fellow shooters of Scorched Earth Gun Range, who were also first time Grand participants, Pete Landfried and Randy Jones along with a couple of over 25 year Grand shooters Mark Isner and Bob Harden to "show them the ropes." Taking them a tour of the facility, the town of Sparta, the Dairy Queen, Walmart, cheap ice and more.

Other secrets were revealed, when to squad for first, second and third events, which banks to shoot, when to get to the bank to avoid being late. What not to drink the night before you shoot and most importantly, identifying insects like corn flies and procedures to discourage them from landing on your gun's rib.



The gang from Scorched Earth reciprocated by preparing gourmet meals for Bob and Mark meticulously prepared by Randy and Pete. One of the group was invited to test drive Pete's prized C6 Corvette, resulting in a terrifying ride for Pete who was calmed with a trip to DQ for a Heath Blizzard.



Mikel's conversion to Krieghoff was complete when he carded a score of 94 from the 23.5 and was called with two other 94's to shoot off for 23-24 yard runner-up and third placements. Boone drops his first target out in the shoot off, running the rest and won 23-24 yard Runner-up in the Caesar Guerini Preliminary Handicap which was quite the feat for a first time attendee in the World's Largest Trapshoot.



Well known WV shooter, Darrel Murray, also trophied during the Grand in Event 22 World Doubles Championship. Darrel broke a 96 and along with four others shot off for two trophies runner-up and third. Darrel ended up with Sr-Vet, Third place.

Robert Harden trophied the first day of Preliminary week, Event 3 Doubles tying with two others for a possible third place after breaking 96. After the carryover to the next day's doubles event, Bob carded a 49 in the first 50 besting the two others to secure Sr-Vet Third place. Bob also received a Grand 25 year attendance patch.

The highlight for Bob, was being selected as one of two Veteran All American representatives for the Blue vs Gray Category Shootout which was held during the Opening ceremony on Monday evening. This event was described as follows:

"The battle between the Blue & the Gray is on in a Miss-N-Out style shoot! Shooters will work their way back to the 27 yard line...and beyond! Not only do our select All-American's get to participate; each shooter will pick a fan from the crowd to compete for to receive a special prize from White Flyer!"

Upon arrival at hospitality tent, Bob was handed a large stack of Category team posters with his picture and name, along with the other nine category All American participants to autograph. The Blue Team consisting of Raylee Bishop, Wyatt DeBrie, Cole Henning, Dagen Voigtman and Dale Stockdale and the Grey Team consisting of Anna Rawe, Cody Meredith, Tyler Honnold, Shane Biser and Robert Harden.

Beginning at the 16 yard line, everyone was given a Golden Ticket to buy back in the case of a miss. The last three shooters standing, would receive prizes along with a person the shooter selected from the audience. Everyone lasted at the 16 then moved back and to one side or another, one by one shooters missed. When the last four shooters were standing, Bob was still in the game. The next shooting distance was approximately 35 yards back; Bob's 1200 fps Federal handicap shells were no match for shooting that distance. Bob ended up one place out of the prizes, "Like my whole season, just one target away..." Bob said. Grey Team Teammate, Tyler Honnold won for the Grey Team. A side note, Bob's Great, Great Grandfather, Samuel Ellis, fought in the Civil War for the Union, they also won!



Mikel Boone, Mark Isner, Robert Harden and Ethan Ferris competed in the Wendell August Champion of Champions. This event was open to the state's Singles Champion or Runner-up and category Champions or runner-ups.



Ethan proudly displays the score sheet showing all 25's on one trap, sadly it didn't last. Boone and Harden were high with 99's.

Mark Isner shot at and broke his 200,000th singles target during Event 4 MEC Outdoors Singles, it was the last target of the 1st 25. Isner leads all West Virginians in total targets shot at 472,875, his

goal is 500,000 which at his current yearly average of over 20,000 targets a year he'll reach his goal in the 2026 target year.

Target totals for active shooters:

Mark Isner 472,875

Darrel Murray 381,450

John Garrison 343,400

Robert Harden 285,850

Darrell Dowler 274,275

Complete 100K list on http://www.wvata.com/?page_id=10