

USPSA's 2006 Nationals

The Changing of the Guard

By ROGER MAIER, USPSA STAFF



In a year that saw the many of the established competitors switching divisions, four new division champions emerged. At the Limited/Limited 10/Revolver nationals, Limited and Limited 10 divisions have first-time champions, and Revolver presented a young shooter to watch in future matches. USPSA also crowned two new champions at the Open/Production nationals held in October at the new United States Shoot-

ing Academy range. Both of these championship events were designed to comfortably accommodate 350 competitors, but there was room for a few more people just in case. Prior to registration, both were overbooked, but it wasn't known how many no-shows there would be. When the final count was in, the Limited/Limited 10/Revolver nationals was exactly at its designed level of 350: Limited - 220; Limited 10 - 97; and Revolver - 33.

The Open/Production nationals had quite a few more at 367: Open - 239 and Production - 128.

The Limited/Limited 10/Revolver Nationals at PASA

With Production division paired up with Open later in 2006, David Sevigny chose to compete in Limited division against many of the usual Limited competitors, including Rob Leatham (who opted for Limited division instead of his favorite, Limited 10). Gun and brain failures steadily reduced the odds of victory for many of the usual contenders until on the last day with

New Open champion, Chris Tilley.

three stages to shoot, the Limited division contest came down to Chris Tilley, Rob Leatham, and David Sevigny. The first stage of the three was "Beep, Beep" a stage in which competitors started sitting behind the steering wheel of a golf cart. Unloaded gun and all magazines were on the back of the cart. At 140 points/28 shots, the stage required at least two magazines. Competitors could put one magazine into the gun, chamber a round, and stuff another magazine into a mag pouch on the way to the first port, or they could grab a magazine and go, grabbing another magazine off the cart on the way to the other side of the shooting area. Each competitor had lots of options and it seems all were tried. While none of the three contenders won this stage, Chris and David were a fraction of a



New Limited 10 Champion, Max Michel Jr.



Range Master John Amidon (left) accepts an arbitration form from Tony Hawkins.

point apart. Rob dropped back about 11 points due to a slower time.

The second stage of the day was “Chamber Check.” It didn’t look like the stage where championships were decided, but it seemed to play that role. Tilley was up by perhaps 16 points, in strong position to say the least. Instead of adding to his lead, Tilley had trouble, finishing seconds off the pace. David won the stage with the fastest time to claim the 110 stage points. Rob gave up another eight points, and Chris’ slow time cost him 20. Going



New Production champion, Rob Leatham.

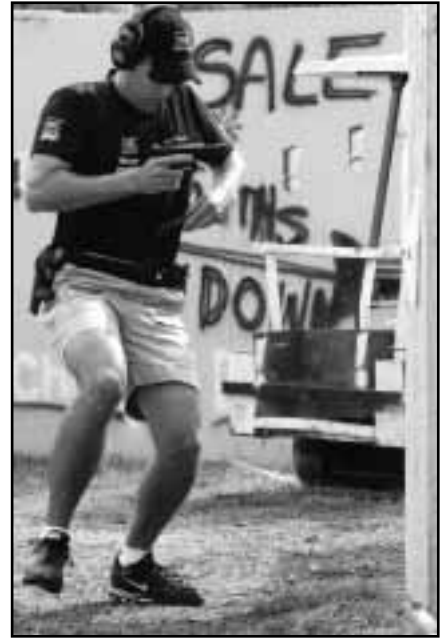
into the last stage, David was four points ahead of Chris and six points ahead of Rob.

The final stage was “Two Door Sedan.” It had the most points at stake, but didn’t have much spectator appeal. After two shots at a single target, competitors opened a door and disappeared into a hallway, reappearing as they passed a couple of open spots along the way. With the pressure on, mistakes were made by Chris and David. Amazingly, both of them had a miss, with Chris faring better with a one-second faster time. It wasn’t enough to beat David though, and Rob wasn’t able to take advantage of their errors, but still managed to shoot accurately enough to



New Limited champion, David Sevigny.

hang on to third place. Todd Jarrett, who hadn’t had a particularly good match for the first three days, had a notable finish with two second place and an eighth place finish on the last three stages to capture fourth place.



**The “Beep Beep” Shuffle:
Grab two,**

Over in Limited 10, Max Michel Jr. wasn't having a walk in the park. Ted Puente was in the lead at various times throughout the match and led Max by 13 points going into the last day, but “Beep Beep” did him in. At some point

Load one (note odd hand position)

in the stage, Ted took an extra shot at a target and lost track of which targets he had engaged. When it came time to score the targets, one target didn't have any holes in it. The two misses and one failure to engage penalty cost him

Stuff one,

nearly 70 points to the stage winner, Max. Now trailing Max by 50 points, Ted was able to make up a few points on “Chamber Check;” however, with only one stage left, even though it was 155 points, it would have taken a ma-



the first time a Glock was used to win the Limited title. And Max Michel Jr., who was 2005's Open division champion, adds a Limited 10 title to his collection the first time he competes at a national championship in that division. The Army's other star member, Travis Tomasié, was shooting in Limited division in an attempt to have the Army come home with a double win.

100+ trips across "Beep Beep" combined with an old knee injury sidelined RO Clay Autery. Autery collided with Taran Butler when Butler stopped suddenly. Autery wrenched his knee in the process.

Rack one,

for crash on Max's part to put Ted back in the lead. Unfortunately for Ted, another miss and a no-shoot penalty dropped him to third place in the final standings behind Max and Doug Koenig.

SHOOT!

While David Seigny holds three Production titles and a Limited 10 title, now he can add a Limited Championship title to his collection. It is also interesting to note that this is





Chris Tilley came within 2.5 points of winning the Limited. Second only to David Sevigny, here he is placing third on "Beep Beep."

Travis, having gun problems serious enough to require changing to his backup gun, could only muster an 11th place finish. Jerry Miculek continues his sweep of Revolver division against a much larger group of dedicated revolver shooters than has been seen at a national championship.

Among the larger contingent of revolver shooters, one youngster was making a name for himself. Sixteen-year-old Nils Jonasson started shooting in Limited division in 2002. He earned a C classification in 2003, went to B in 2004, then through A to Master in 2005. In January 2006, he began shooting Revolver classifiers at clubs in Arizona nearly every week. He earned an A classification in May and jumped to Grand Master in August. In his first Nationals appearance, Nils finished second to Jerry Miculek at 92 percent. Look out, Jerry!

Ladies Category

Lisa Munson and Julie Goloski added Limited and

Limited 10 titles to their extensive collections. Lisa seemed unstoppable against rivals Renee Tyson and Kay Clark, finishing nearly 100 points ahead of both ladies. In Limited 10, Julie had competition from second-place Debbie Keehart, who shot a Para-Ordnance pistol she had won at a match years before, and from a new name among the ladies, Randi Rogers, who took third. Then there was BJ Ratliff, who had competed only at the 2004 Nationals since her last Nationals appearance in 2000. She continued to shoot regularly at her home club in several divisions, earning a B classification in Limited 10. BJ finished fourth.



The "unstoppable" Lisa Munson.

The Open/Production Nationals

Just a few weeks after the Limited Championship match concluded, staff

and competitors alike packed up and headed for Tulsa, Okla., and the brand-new, but still-unfinished, United States Shooting Academy. The shooting bays had been built and truckloads of sod placed, then placed off-limits to ensure they were going to take hold before more than 350 competitors arrived for the nationals, but no buildings had been constructed. The range was so

Handgun Art

By *BATAVIA, A54458*

Scott Baron, a first year USPSA member, had this idea rolling around in his head for a while and finally decided to try it out on one of his non-match handguns — one that he wouldn't mind if he messed up the finish. "I used Duracote paint, an airbrush, and a stencil I made myself. It turned out rather nice," said Scott. When he purchased his first Springfield XD, there were very few one-stop shops for buying XD products, so Baron launched his own website: www.pistolgear.com. Today, "we ship guide rods, Novak magwells, Insight XML weapon



lights, magazines, normal holsters and holsters for XDs with the night light attached, TRUGLO night sights, compensators, threaded barrels, and grip extensions."

I asked Baron if he paints handguns as a service. He told me it is just a hobby. "I don't have an FFL. People can go to pistolgear.com to e-mail me and I'll be glad to tell them how to do it."

Watching Baron shoot his Springfield XD, the muzzle blast blends in with the flames painted on the slide, making the gun look extra-fast. Maybe the pros will start painting their handguns to gain the faster edge? Look for it at a range near you.

Editor's Note: While legal until 2008, a paint job like this could be outlawed by proposed changes to the Production rules currently being discussed by the USPSA Board of Directors.





Beware Los Ballesteros! Jorge and Lorena Ballesteros of Spain both put on an excellent display of practical shooting skill. Sadly, Jorge fell victim to gun malfunctions and finished the match by borrowing his sister's pistol.

new that a few people who typed the range address into internet mapping search engines were mis-directed to the south of Tulsa instead of north. Note for future nationals competitors, check out the USPSA nationals' web site for continually updated information and maps to scheduled USPSA national events. You will find a host of national information at www.uspsa-nationals.org.

Match staff and many competitors stayed at the Crowne Plaza hotel in the downtown district of Tulsa. A 10-minute drive took you from the hotel to the range, located next door to the Tulsa Police Academy. Every day during the match, the sound of sub-machine gun fire could be heard coming from the police range. It's a

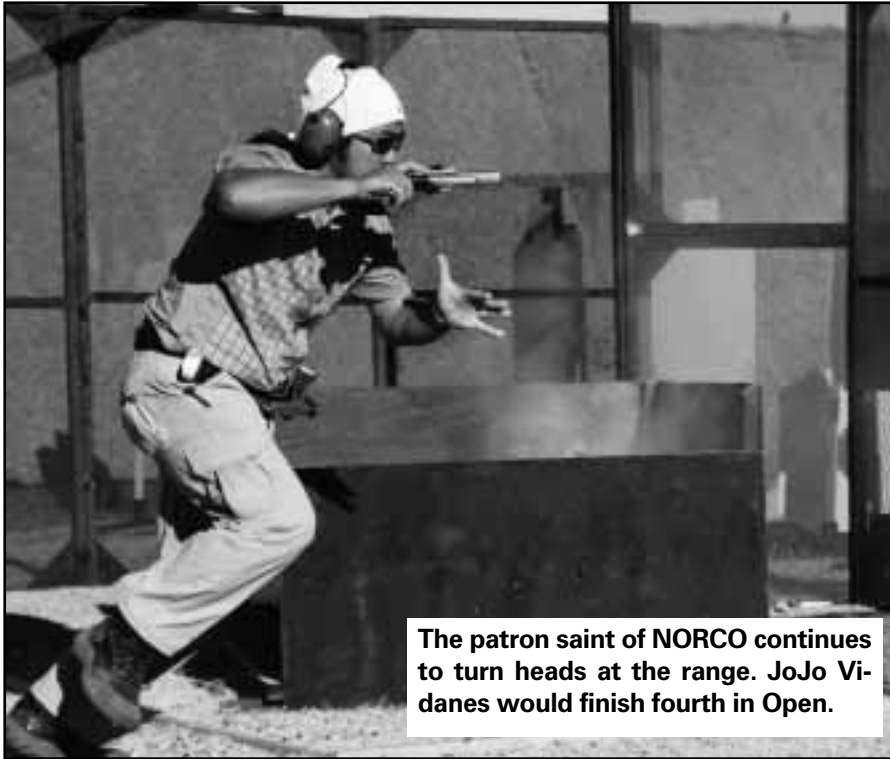


Bruce Bethell, Greg Holz, and Perry Wilson did something to get shooters and staff to sign their wall at the Open. Whatever it was, they look pretty happy about it.

safe bet that the dozens of police cars parked next door discouraged many a competitor from collecting speeding tickets on the way to the range.

In a continuation of the division shuffling seen at the Limited Nationals, here too the well-known, established (code words for older) shooters were choosing Production over Open. For some people, the conventional wisdom dictated that as shooters aged, they would gravitate toward the dot-sighted division to compensate for failing eyesight. It seems conventional wisdom failed to take into account that knees and backs and other speed-related body parts also deteriorate with age. So while the eyes may not be so keen, creaking knees are sure to leave the aging competitors far behind the young speedsters like Chris Tilley, Max Michel Jr., and one of the Army team's newer members, K. C. Eusebio. To be sure, there are a few guys who've been around for a while, like JoJo Vidanes, Henning Wallgren, and Saul Kirsch still competing in Open division; however, with teenagers like Brad Balsley and BJ Norris regularly finishing in the top 16, we may see more changes in the next few years.

Unlike the Limited nationals, the Open and Production matches were mostly a game of one person leading and everyone else trying to catch up. In Open division, Chris Tilley was only



The patron saint of NORCO continues to turn heads at the range. JoJo Vidanes would finish fourth in Open.

two points behind Max Michel Jr. after three stages. From then on, Chris took the lead and only Max was able to stay in the race, ultimately coming up a few points short. Accuracy seems to have

been the deciding factor. A look at the stage scores shows that Max did not fare well on the three stages that featured difficult, long-distance shots, whereas Chris was usually near the top

of those stages. Third place acted like a revolving door for competitors vying for position. First it was KC Eusebio, then Brad Balsley, then Henning Wallgren, but it was JJ Racaza who was in the door when the shooting stopped, followed by JoJo Vidanes in fourth. USPSA's records on national champions and their ages at the time of winning the title is incomplete, but it's possible that Chris is the youngest national champion ever.

It is interesting to note that, after not shooting for many years, Matt McLearn returned to compete in Open division to take 10th place. Matt said he shot only one match in 2005, and the 2006 Nationals was his third match for the year. Matt won the Open title and IPSC World Championship in 1993 while he was living in Claremore, Okla., which is only a few miles from the USSA range. Matt's gunsmithing business is now located in Arizona, but he made the trip back to Tulsa for this match with his wife and growing family.

In 2005, Jorge Ballesteros came



The Terror of Team Limcat, JJ "Razor" Racaza shot his way to third Open.

from Spain and opened a few eyes with his shooting skills. For several days of that match it looked like Jorge would win it, but mistakes and gun problems took him out of the running. Jorge returned again this year with his sister, Lorena, to try again. He was to be disappointed as his pistol gave him so

much trouble that he finished the match sharing his sister's gun. match, it was a race between Rob and Matthew Mink, but by the third day Rob had built an insurmountable lead. Not even an unusual error by Rob gave his competitors much of an opening. On "Sprint Race," one of the three stages on the last day, Rob opened a door and indexed on a target. After he



CZ's Darion Holiwell.

much trouble that he finished the match sharing his sister's gun.

was finished shooting the stage he said that as he was pulling the trigger, he said to himself, "that's not right." The resulting hole was a nice A-zone hit on a no-shoot. He quickly made up the shot, keeping a bad situation from getting worse.

Shooting Production places a premium on getting your hits

because of its minor power factor. It became apparent throughout the match that those competitors who were willing to accept D hits were not

In 2003, Rob Leatham shot in Production division with Springfield's then-new XD pistol against David Seigny and his Glock. David had been winning just about everything there was to win in Production, so that matchup was a premier event. David won that match by 87 points. So the rematch between Rob and David at this nationals was of great interest to many spectators. As it turned out, for half of the



Jerry Miculek finished 34th Production with the new S&W M&P.

far as well as those who strived for at least C hits. Taking another shot to make up a D hit was a good tactical choice as long as the D hit was noticed immediately.

Hitting the D zone with minor power factor is one thing that the shooter can control, but steel targets that don't cooperate are another thing entirely. A few competitors, most notably Taran Butler, had more than his share of problem poppers. At first he would shoot poppers several times until they went down, but the extra time resulted in poor scores. Later, he started to leave the poppers standing and call for calibration, but more often than not, the popper would go down when the range master shot it. If there was any controversy at all, it was with the forward falling poppers on the new sod in Tulsa. The problems with these poppers are sure to be worked out before the 2007 Nationals rolls around.

Ladies Category

The Open ladies contest turned out to be a squeaker for Kay Miculek. While she was looking over her shoulder at Rebecca Jones and two-time ladies World Shoot champion Athena Lee, a Dutch shooter named Desiree Van Noord was shooting on a different squad with other competitors from Holland. Hidden by the difference in daily point totals, Van Noord was gain-

ing fast on Miculek. When the final results were posted, Kay had won, but by half a match point over Desiree. Rebecca Jones took third and Athena Lee fourth.

In the Ladies Production contest, Julie Goloski claimed her second national championship title of the year,



Athena Lee activates her C-More prior to blast-off. The Ladies' World Shoot champion would finish fourth at 71.85 percent.

this time shooting a Smith & Wesson Military & Police pistol. Carina Randolph took second and Angi Kelley finished third. When Julie won the Production division title in Tulsa, it made her the first person to win three USPSA national titles in a calendar year. First, she won the Ladies Single Stack title in April, then she added the Ladies Limited 10 title in September and, finally, the Production title in October. The only other year three USPSA divisional titles were up for grabs was 2003 with the Factory Nationals at PASA and a back-to-back Open and Limited Nationals at Bend, Ore. However, that year Todd Jarrett and Lisa Munson were able to claim two USPSA national titles.



Lorena Ballesteros shot her way to 7th Lady at 68.06 percent, less than a percentage point behind sixth-place Lisa Munson..

Changing Venues

The year 2006 had two of the most successful national championships on two of the finest shooting ranges in the country.

The first continued USPSA's long-running re-



Michael Seeklander assumes the start position, targets visible in the background.

relationship with the Pike-Adams Sportsman's Alliance (PASA). The second began a new relationship with the United States Shooting Academy (USSA) began.

For the past 20 years, beginning in 1987, USPSA has held at least one of its national championship matches at PASA each year. In the early years of this relationship, USPSA held only a single match with more than 500 competitors coming to Quincy for a week of shooting. There were no divisions. Everyone competed against everyone else for the National Championship title with category and class awards mixed in. Prior to 1993, "Stock" was a category, and it was from this category that the Limited Division was born. From then on, with the exception of 2004, members could choose from at least two national championship matches per year, and PASA was the host range for one of them.

Along the way, the members of PASA gained experience in producing a national-level championship. While under the Dave Stanford and Andy Hollar administrations, the match director was the USPSA president with



AMD Deb Hawkins, always moving.

range masters selected from the NROI cadre. The Michael Voigt administration opened a new era in which a local club member took on the task of being match director. For PASA, Ray Hirst emerged as the man. Ray had started as a Nationals range officer in the early

1990s and worked his way up through the ranks. Over the past few years, Ray and his loyal cadre worked hard to raise the standards of national championships.

The situation at the United States Shooting Academy is very much different. One year before the match took place, there wasn't even a range, only a concept in the mind of Tom Fee, a Tulsa, Okla, businessman, to build one of the finest shooting ranges in the country, if not the world. It was to be a place where all shooting disciplines could come to play, and where various law enforcement agencies could come for training. While the range took shape at a slower pace than anyone was comfortable with, mainly a result of red tape, Tom built up a cadre of instructors and range management staff to handle the chores of running major events. Kelly Raglin, as USSA's range master, eventually took on the role of match director for the Open-Production National Championship. While Kelly's experience with matches of this level was limited to shooting them, he had the backing of USPSA's office staff and NROI Range Master Instructor Troy McManus to design stages, assemble match staff, and take care of the hundreds of details associated with a match of this magnitude.

Throughout the spring and summer of 2006, shooting bays and enormous berms took shape in what used to be a grove of pecan trees. It wasn't possible to build all of the amenities for this match in the short time available,

but large tents and the ubiquitous porta-potty would suffice as long as the berms were in. Not only were the berms in, they, and the floors of the shooting bays, were covered with a carpet of Bermuda grass sod. Because this type of grass requires a great deal of water, the berms have water lines embedded in them, with sprinkler heads along the ridges.

The alignment of the bays may seem disconcerting when you realize that one row of shooting bays is on the back side of the back berm of the other row. However, forward falling poppers solve the problem of lead splatter hopping over the berms, and the steep angle of the grassy berms contain any ricochets.

Without doubt, USPSA will return



For Chris Tilley, victory is sweet.

to Tulsa and the United States Shooting Academy's range for many a match. This is not to say that Ray Hirst and the PASA crew will become like the Maytag repairman, as it is already known that the USPSA/1911 Society Single Stack Classic will be held there next year. And, as always, whenever USPSA has two national championships on the schedule, PASA Park will be a favorite place to go.

Sponsors

The fantastic prize tables at these matches would not have been possible without the generous support of USPSA many dedicated sponsors. Gold Sponsors are Match sponsors for all of the national championship matches, except for the Single Stack match. So for the 2006 Limited/Limited 10/Revolver Nationals and the Open/Production Nationals, the Gold Sponsors were STI International, SV Infinity Firearms, Advanced Performance Shooting, Para-Ordnance, and the United States Shooting Academy.

Similar to the Gold Sponsors, Silver sponsors are stage sponsors at all of the national championships. The Silver sponsors were Action Target, Oakley, Safariland, Surefire LLC, and Trijicon.

And then there are the Bronze Sponsors, which are Vendor sponsors at all the national Championships. The Bronze Sponsors were Blackhawk Industries, Caspian Arms



Twice victorious, Julie Goloski put her stamp on both the Production and Limited 10 titles this year, shooting for Smith & Wesson.

Ltd., C-More Systems, Dawson Precision, Millennium Custom II, Montana Gold Bullets, NSSF, Precision Delta Corp., Springfield Armory, VihtaVuori, and Winchester Ammunition.

In addition to the sponsors listed above, other sponsors could choose to sponsor only a single national championship.

For the Limited/Limited 10/Revolver Nationals, the stage sponsors were Brazos Custom Gunworks, Glock Inc., Smith & Wesson, and SPS. Vendor sponsors were Brownells, and Decot Hy-Wyd Sport Glasses.

For the Open/Production Nationals, the match sponsors were Glock and i-Shot. Stage sponsors were Brazos Custom Gunworks, CZ-USA, Secure Firearm Products, Smith & Wesson, and Truck Vault. And vendor sponsors were Armscor Precision, Arredondo Manufacturing, Brownells, CPWSA, Decot Hy-Wyd Sport Glasses, Double Alpha Academy, Mitchell Custom Guns, NRA, Precision Bullets, SPS and Speed Shooters.

Without these sponsors, it is doubtful that the USPSA Nationals would be as successful and highly regarded as they are. Please be sure to thank these sponsors when you make your purchases.

