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Bullseye: A 'Zen'

By Jon Milan

Next year marks the 100th Anniversary of the National Matches at the Ohio National Guard's Camp Perry near Port Clinton, Ohio. Starting the second week of July, Camp Perry hosts five weeks of National Championship pistol and rifle matches. Disciplines include NRA Conventional Pistol, Smallbore Three-Position, Smallbore Prone, High Power Rifle and Long Range Rifle.

The Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) adds to the fun, holding their National pistol and rifle matches amidst the NRA National Championship matches. CMP competition is limited to "service" firearms, and for pistol that means either an M9 Beretta (9mm) or an M1911 (.45 Caliber), that must look like service-issued arms, shooting "ball" ammo, giving this competition the name "Hardball."

"NRA Conventional Pistol" is just the longer, official sounding name for what most of us call "Bullseye Pistol." Bullseye pistol is shot *single handed*, at targets either 50 yards or 25 yards away. Our 10-ring is just over three inches wide, and the center "X" used for tiebreakers is about an inch and a half.

Matches include three courses of fire, "Slow Fire," "Timed Fire," and "Rapid Fire." The Slow Fire course places the target 50 yards away. A stage is 10 shots in 10 minutes. Timed Fire is fired in five-shot strings, 20 seconds per string with the target placed at 25 yards. Rapid Fire uses the same target as Timed Fire, with only 10 seconds given for each five-shot string. Some events, such as team events, use a 30-shot National Match Course, using 10 shots Slow Fire, 10 shots Timed Fire (that's two strings), and 10 shots Rapid Fire (also two strings). The individual events are 90-shot matches, with 30 shots of each course.

Counter to the run-and-gun combat pistol games, Bullseye can be called a "Zen" shooting sport. A full event of 270 shots (2700 points) will take most of the day, shooting 90 shots each with a .22 Caliber pistol, a Center Fire pistol and a .45 Caliber pistol. Bullseye pistol takes a lot of patience and practice. High Master shooters will often shoot better than 2600, and it took USAR SSG James Henderson 14 attempts and a score of 2643-134x to win the National Championship this year.

The Arizona State Rifle & Pistol Association (ASR&PA) annually sends a pistol team to Camp Perry to vie for national honors. Potential team members compete for a spot on the team by shooting "Team Tryout" Service Pistol matches, held after the Phoenix Rod & Gun Club's scheduled Bullseye pistol competitions. The CMP's National Trophy Team event requires one "tyro" shooter – someone who has never shot the NTT match. So at least one "tyro" is included in the team selection.

The ASR&PA Pistol Team is an un-sponsored



2006 Arizona State Pistol Team – Standing, from left: Don Klin (Snowflake, AZ). Kneeling, from left: Jon Milan (Phoenix, AZ),

civilian team. We're all fans of our Dillon Precision loading machines, so we welcome the wall space given to photos of past Arizona State Pistol Teams at the Dillon Precision showroom in Scottsdale, Arizona. And Dillon provides the team with clean Dillon Precision hats for the photo!

Last July, the six members of the Arizona State Pistol Team made the annual pilgrimage to Camp Perry, shooting among over 650 pistol competitors. Camp Perry is an open, uncovered range. That means windy conditions, and there's no escaping the rain. The sky opened as usual this year, and the firing range was cleared twice during lightning storms, and the team was standing in puddles up to their ankles on Saturday!