

Cactus Classic 2019 - Ben Avery Range Phoenix, Az

This year the Cactus Classic the largest 2 day short range benchrest match, was held March 9-10 under new management. Matt Schwartzkopf and Michele Gallagher, new management. Matt was the range officer and Michele did the scoring. The match ran smooth and the scoring was right on. The Wickenburg high school rifle team ran the targets and again they did an outstanding job. We had local shooters and many other shooters help setting the range up for the competition and that was very much appreciated. Berger Bullets- Capstone Precision Group again supported the match as well as various vendors. Again this year there was a dinner Saturday after the 100 yard competition, sponsored by the Capstone group. Also at the dinner, donated shooting items were given away based upon a drawing. Items consisted of Nightforce scopes, rifle barrels, Marsh/McMillan stocks as well as other shooting related items.

The match started off with 5 days of practice, if you were fortunate enough to get the time off to shoot. The weather for the weeks practice consisted of temps from a high of 85 degrees to high of 69 on Friday right before the shoot. The lows each morning were in the high 50's. The winds were all over the map. We had periods of very light winds. However on Friday nearly all day the wind blew approaching 30 mph. Much of discussion for practice was how far the bullet was moving from the group with what appeared to be light flag movement. Local shooter Joe Pipola acted as range officer for the practice sessions. In my opinion he did a good job. He left the range open for practice when he could and closed it down often enough so shooters could set up for practice.

Saturday the 9th we shot 100 yards all day, starting off with the Light Varmint class. Out of the box, Jack Snyder of Edgewood fame, won the first match with .105 group. This however wasn't the small group for the yardage; Duke Rovarino shot a .088 in the next match to take small group for the LV 100 aggregate. Dukes small group was the only zero shot in this aggregate. Given that we had 131 competitors it points out how tricky the shooting conditions were. Winning the aggregate was Ed Adams with a .1984. In second place was Lester Bruno just 14 ten thousands behind with a .1998. These were the only 2 shoots in the ones for an agg. Third place went to Courtney Sorenson with a .2056. If I'm not mistaken Courtney hasn't been shooting benchrest that long, maybe a couple of years. Forth place went to (Woody) Bud Schalles with a .2146 and in fifth place was a Cactus Sponsor Lou Murdica .2178.

After a short break for lunch we shot the Heavy varmint 100 yard aggregate. The shooting conditions changed a bit. It appeared they were changing a bit quicker, as result it was imperative you paid attention for all five shots. The only shooter to do this and he did it to the max was Ed Adams. Ed's first place aggregate of .1590 was light years away from everyone else. Ed shot four ones and a low two for his agg. In second place was Keith Cottrell with a .2014. Third place was Chuck Miller with a .2020. Forth place was Wayne Campbell with a .2026 and rounding out the top five was Don Pumpkin Nielson with a .2190. Don's aggregate was helped in the forth match when he shot a .086 for small group for the aggregate. Again, as in the LV class we only had one zero shot. That result is very unusual for 130+ shooters in today's benchrest competition.

I don't have the stats of the 100 yard leaders; but I'd say Ed Adams two 100 yard aggregate average of .1787 is way ahead of the pack.

Sunday we shot the 200 yard stages, starting off with the Heavy Varmint class. Before the match started the wind was coming off the mountain from the North as it often does this time of the year. We got lucky as it started to die down just as the first relay was set to shoot. By the time the third relay was shooting it was just about gone and what developed was our standard left and right

sometimes quartering stuff. Winning match #1 was Bob Martinez with a .185. This also happened to be the small 200 yard group in Heavy Varmint. Winning the aggregate was Canadian Hugh Williamson with a .1889 aggregate shooting one of his own barrels. Hugh's first 4 targets were low mid three's. In second place was Lowell Frei with .2136. In third place was Dave Gibson with a .2160, fourth place was Wayne Campbell with a .2272 and in fifth place another Canadian Robert Seemann shooting a .2315. Look out USA World team shooters, looks like the Canadians are working at it and shooting on their home soil will be tough to beat. Even though the conditions were sneaky tricky there wasn't a one inch target fired by any shooter till 48th place. Very competitive shooting from a lot of shooters.

Again after a brief lunch we shot the 200 yard stage of the Light Varmint class. By this time the winds picked up. Winds were switching and letting up at the same time. We also had at times some heavier than normal mirage. Winning the yardage was Cover Boy Greg King with a .2490. Greg shot steady for this agg with 2 four's and 3 fives. In second place was Bruce Black with a .2558, third place was Robert Seemann with a .2606. In fourth place was Ed Adams with .2729 and in fifth place was Wayne Campbell with a .2817. To give you an idea of how tricky it was for this aggregate Wayne's aggregate of .2817 for fifth place would have been 27th place in the mornings HV aggregate. You had to have your game on to place well in this aggregate. Small group for the aggregate was a .248 fired by Tom Ross in match 5. I saw that target and it looked like 4 shots could have been in a zero or at least a small one.

Light Varmint Grand

1. Ed Adams .2357
2. Lester Bruno .2426
3. Robert Seemann .2589
4. Greg King .2618
5. Wayne Campbell .2655
6. Bob Brackney .2670
7. Bud Schalles .2676
8. Jack Neary .2697
9. Scott Haywood .2708
10. Mike Conry .2826

Heavy Varmint Grand

1. Ed Adams .2038
2. Wayne Campbell .2149
3. Hugh Williamson .2296
4. Rex Reneau .2319
5. Chuck Miller .2326
6. Dean Ekstrom .2334
7. Lowell Frei .2366
8. Keith Cottrell .2377
9. Dave Gibson .2387
10. Michael Pennell .2394

2-Gun

1. Ed Adams .2197
2. Wayne Campbell .2402
3. Lester Bruno .2553
4. Greg King .2553
5. Bob Brackney .2616
6. Rex Reneau .2631
7. Chuck Miller .2663
8. Hugh Williamson .2669
9. Keith Cottrell .2680
10. Michael Pennell .2685

Gary Ocock
Match Reporter

The following is a note from Matt Schwartzkopf Match Director

Thank you to Lester Bruno with Bruno's Shooting Supply, Pat Reagin with PMA Tools, and Lou and Connie Murdica who all sponsored bonus matches.

Joe Pipola for running the line during the practices.

Lou Murdica for supporting the club, providing valuable advice, and helping with multiple tasks for the match (ie working with the tent people, coordinating campers and reloading trailers)

Michelle Gallagher for not only measuring targets, but also working lots of hours leading up to the match getting sponsors, updating the website, and various other tasks in planning the match.

Capstone (Berger) for sponsoring the match and providing the shirts, patches, programs, banquet meal, tents, tables, and port-a-potties.

Susan Schwartzkopf for working during the practice registering shooters and setting up the banquet.

Ryan Neal for helping clean up after the match and setting up the banquet.

Numerous local benchrest shooters for rebuilding all of the target frames (I would forget someone if I tried to mention everyone)

Gary Ocock for completing the equipment list, writing the match report, and providing valuable advice in the planning of the match and during.

The Wickenburg High School Rifle Team for being the target crew. They did an amazing job and are the fastest target crew that I have seen.

Sophia Marquardt and Kaycie Blankenship for helping in the stat office.

Bob Brackney for providing \$250 to the shooter that placed 21st in the 2 Gun, which was junior shooter Tony DeBacco.

Thanks to all of the sponsors for making the event a success.

Cash Option payout will be mailed out shortly.