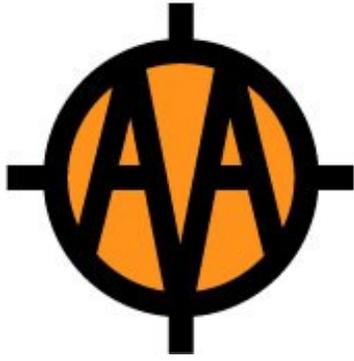


The Wing and Clay Flyer

official newsletter of



Shooting Instruction

VOLUME II, ISSUE I WINTER 2006

Waiting for the next flock...and next fall!



For *Arien (Rien) of Fitzgerald's Prairie* (Wirehaired Pointing Griffon), last season was a blast, and next season cannot get here soon enough!!

Double A Shooting Instruction advocates shotgun shooting at all levels through lessons, shooting clinics, and other activities such as group outings and educational seminars. In addition, Double A Shooting Instruction promotes local shooting ranges and clubs by introducing new shooters to the facilities and by improving the shooting abilities of existing customers. For more information on AA Shooting instruction, please visit my website at www.AAshooting.com

Wing and Clay Flyer: Winter 2006

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Continuous improvement is a term used (and often overused) in the business world today. Constantly striving to improve skill sets of company workforces is what keeps businesses successful and profitable. The same is true of our shooting.

Winter is a great time to reflect back on the great memories of last season and plan for the season ahead. I would like to discourage all of you wingshooters from hanging up your gun for the season and instead, do some more hunting at one of your local hunting preserves. When preserve hunting season is over (March 31 here in Iowa), keep that field gun out and find a local clay target facility to work on the fundamentals necessary for putting birds in the bag. Leagues are a great way to commit yourself to practice and also a great way to meet new people and spend more time with friends and family.

For you competitive shooters, now is the time to make any equipment changes in your game. Gun repairs, stock work and prescription shooting glasses all take time and it is best to get these items sent in now so you have time to work with new equipment before the first shoot rolls around. You should also be looking at the shoot schedule for the 2006 calendar year and be selecting shoots you would like to attend. Selecting shoots ahead of time helps you plan your practice and can save you money when booking travel on out-of-town shoots. It will also help you better coordinate shoots with work and family schedules.

I personally am working hard and making investments for continuous improvement as your shooting coach. In the coming months I will be traveling to the SHOT Show to look for new products and services that may benefit my students. After that, I will be attending a NRA shotgun coaches camp being conducted by one of the top Olympic shotgun coaches for USA Shooting. This course focuses on youth and team development. In March, I will be attending a NSCA Level II sporting clays certification course in order to better serve my competitive sporting clays students. A busy winter for me indeed!!!

**Until Next Time,
Good Shooting!
Ben S. Berka**



About The Wing and Clay Flyer

The Wing and Clay Flyer is the official publication of AA Shooting Instruction. The primary purpose of the Wing and Clay Flyer is to update the shooting public on upcoming shooting events and instructional information on shotgun shooting. Published quarterly, the Wing and Clay Flyer will also provide a variety of general-interest wing and clay shooting articles.

Two types of Wing and Clay Flyer subscriptions are available, the online version and the print version. The online version is posted to the Double A Shooting Instruction website and links are distributed via email upon publication. The online version of the newsletter also contains hyperlinks to additional information on the Double A Shooting Instruction website and other worldwide websites. The Wing and Clay Flyer, online edition is provided at no cost. Back-issues of the Wing and Clay Flyer are archived on the Double A Shooting Instruction website. To subscribe, please send an email to Ben Berka indicating you would like to subscribe to the online edition.

The print version of the Wing and Clay Flyer is mailed quarterly via regular USPS mail. Cost for a one-year subscription (four issues) is \$10. To subscribe to the print version of the Wing and Clay Flyer, please send a check or money order for \$10 (payable to AA Shooting Instruction) to:

AA Shooting Instruction
c/o Wing and Clay Flyer
PO Box 13
Johnston, IA 50131

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Feature Article

Practice Year-Round...without leaving your home!

The winter months here in Iowa (like much of the Midwest) are typically cold and windy and it is difficult to do much on-range practice without dressing up with so many clothes you feel like that Ralphie in the classic holiday movie, *A Christmas Story*. Fortunately, there are several drills you can do in the comfort of your own home without all of the bulky clothes and without even firing a shot. The drills in described in this article will give you a head start over your competition when the spring season rolls around and certainly put more birds in the bag.

Mounting Drills

One of the most basic and effective ways to practice in the off-season is to simply work on your gun mount. Whether you shoot sporting clays, skeet, trap, or are practicing for the field, a repeatable and grooved mount is essential. The purpose of practicing the mount is to make the mount so routine that the subconscious can perform the task with ease. Keep in mind that good shotgun handling should be like pointing your finger at a distant object; you do not have to look at your finger to know where it is being pointed! A shotgun should perform as an extension of you index finger and point instinctively. Practicing the mount will help make this process subconsciously to enable you to focus entirely on the target.

When mounting the gun, be sure to take your time to make a good mount...do not hurriedly slap your gun up and down to and from your shoulder. Instead, make a nice, smooth move, bringing the comb of the gun to your face then back to your shoulder pocket. The hands should work together to move the gun. Try to envision that you have a bayonet on the end of your gun and you are making a 'stabbing' motion to the target. The muzzle should not dip up and down during a proper gun mount nor should the stock make a 'see-saw' motion. I would recommend practicing the following mounting drills 10-15 minutes a day, 3 days per week with a gun that has been checked to be proven empty.

1. **Mirror mount.** To practice the mirror mount, simply find a mirror (full length, rectangular mirrors are preferred) in a room large enough to mount the gun. Stand back about 5 feet from the mirror and focus on the reflection of your eye that is over the gun. Try to mount the gun directly to the reflection of your eye using the 'stabbing' motion described above.

2. **Flashlight Corner Mount.** In this drill and in drill #3 below, you will need a mini-Mag flashlight (or equivalent) and an open choke in your 12 gauge shotgun (skeet or improved cylinder work best). Find a dimly-lit room with at least an 8 foot ceiling. Place the flashlight in the muzzle of your empty gun (top barrel for over/unders) and focus the light to its smallest beam. Place the light in the corner and focus your eyes on the light. Practice the mount over and over while keeping the beam of light stationary in the corner. Remember to focus only on the light.

3. **Flashlight Wall Mount.** This drill can be practiced in conjunction with the corner mount drill. I would recommend practicing the corner mount drill first, and then move onto this one. In the wall mount drill, face a wall with two corners at least 10 feet apart. Place the light in one corner with a dis-mounted gun. Move the gun towards the opposite corner while keeping the light on the seam where the wall meets the ceiling. The mount should be complete by the time the light reaches the opposite corner. Practice left to right and right to left several times.

Dry Fire Practice

Dry fire practice can be layered onto any of the mounting drills listed above. I recommend dry-fire practice to many of my students who are having problems with target focus, flinching and follow through after the shot. Even if you are not having problems in these areas, dry-fire practice is highly effective – and best of all FREE!



A Mini-Mag flashlight fits perfectly inside a 12ga barrel with skeet or improved cylinder chokes

(Continued on page 4)

(Home Practice: Continued from page 3)

First, purchase a good pair of snap-caps; these are dummy cartridges with a spring inside to prevent premature wearing of firing pin springs. Next, use the snap caps with any of the 3 drills listed above. For the flashlight drills you may need some tape to keep the light in the barrel when re-cocking the gun. Fire the 'shot' at the moment the mount is complete. For the flashlight wall mount drill, pick a spot between the two corners as your 'kill-point' and follow-through to the opposite corner. Remember to keep your focus on the light throughout the entire move, mount, shot, and follow-through. If you do this properly, the speed of the swing should not change until you stop the gun at the opposite corner (post follow-through).

DryFire Target Simulator

For those of you who are serious about training year-round in the comfort of your own home, DryFire USA (www.dryfireus.com) has a training system you should look into. The DryFire simulator is different (and in my opinion better) than other simulators since you can use your own gun and the software gives you precise feedback on where your shot went (down to the inch!). The system is made up of two core components:

1. A small software-controlled laser projector that can be mounted on a standard camera tripod
2. A sophisticated laser pointer that fits in the barrel of your shotgun

The system also includes cables, power supply, software, demo CD a pair of snap caps and documentation. The user must provide a PC with a serial port. If your computer does not have a serial port, you will need to purchase a USB to serial adapter for about \$30.

In researching this article I contacted Bob Ridge at DryFire USA. We spoke about the system over the phone and he agreed to send me a demo unit for evaluation. When the unit arrived, I was surprised at the small size of the system and was impressed by the clearly written and comprehensive documentation (and I have written my fair share of software documentation!!). It took me just about two hours to set up the 'trap range', install software, and configure the system. I ran into only one hitch when starting to use the program and it was not the fault of the DryFire software but rather a problem one of the graphics-controller files on my PC. Fortunately, the DryFireUS website has a comprehensive help section and the problem was easily solved by going online to find a different version of the graphics controller file.

The software contains layouts for American and international versions of skeet and trap and also has sporting clays. You can choose to shoot a full round or work on specific stations. My first test was with ATA Trap. I set up the course according to the easy-to-follow directions provided with the system. Basically, this amounted to placing the laser projector 36" from the wall, drawing a trap house and horizon on the wall with erasable marker and placing masking tape on the floor to represent the 5 posts on the trap field. Once the course was set, it was time to calibrate the barrel insert to my shotgun to give the gun the proper point of impact (POI). The patterning process took about 5 minutes and consisted of firing one shot by aiming at the projected laser dot and then shooting several shots at a the dot without aiming. The results are shown on a pattern plate in the software and if you are not happy with the results, you can repeat the process until your gun is shooting where you want it to shoot.

I was thoroughly impressed with the realism of the trap layout and the virtual 'targets' presented in the trap programs. It felt like I was shooting an actual round of trap on a regulation field. The shot analysis seems to be extremely accurate as well. There were a few times I lifted my head or stopped my gun and sure enough the shot was either high or behind! The hard rights on post 5 seemed all too real!! However, when I paid attention, looked hard for the 'target' and made a good move, the 'target' broke as expected.

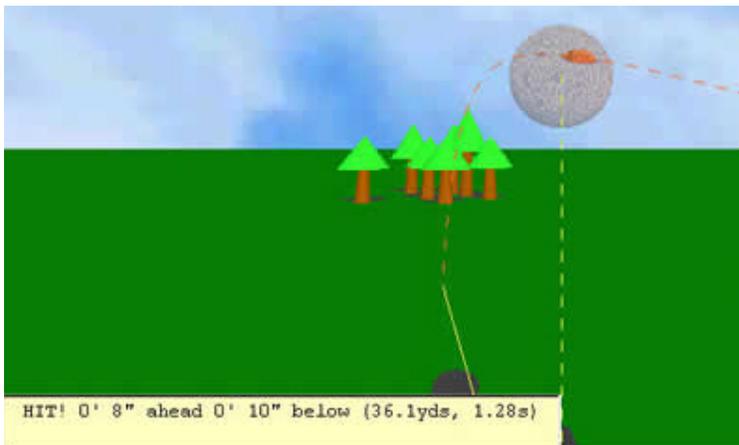


The DryFire laser projector mounts onto a standard camera tripod
Note: 12ga snap cap for scale

(Continued on page 5)

(DryFire: Continued from page 4)

Next, I tested the system on skeet and sporting clays and found some limitations with the 2-dimensional technology in general (some of the problems may also be in my crude attempt at drawing a skeet field background!). The system works great on games with outgoing targets (like trap) but does not seem quite as realistic on the incoming targets seen in skeet and sporting clays. DryFire uses a different audio tone for incoming targets versus outgoing targets, however I still found incomers to be a little confusing and the skeet layout a little tough to use due only to these issues. In talking to Bob Ridge about the skeet setup, he mentioned that DryFire is working on a new system (version 3) that will incorporate two laser projectors and new skeet field layout documentation which should make skeet shooting with the system much more realistic. It is worth noting that much of the research on the two-laser unit was conducted with world champion skeet shooter Todd Bender.



DryFire's software is extremely accurate at calling hits and misses down to the inch!

The DryFire system costs about \$800 and in my opinion is a bargain for the complex technology that has been designed into the hardware and software. While it takes some PC literacy to install the system initially, it is extremely simple to use once it is set up. The online help at www.dryfireus.com is very comprehensive and the documentation sent with the system is great. Bob Ridge indicated the new two laser units will cost around \$1400 and credit will be given for users of the single-laser systems wanting to trade-up.

With very minor limitations aside, I think this is a fabulous training tool for the trap, skeet and sporting shooter. Although the current system is marketed primarily at the trap shooter, I don't know any skeet or sporting shooter who couldn't benefit from this system even if all they choose to shoot are outgoing targets. The simple fact that you can shoot thousands of targets per year without leaving your home should be worth a lot regardless of the discipline you shoot.

Until next time, Good Shooting!

Ben

Note: After thoroughly evaluating the demo unit, I have decided not to send it back! I think this is a great tool I can use for practice and for teaching kids and novice shooters without the recoil and cost associated with range practice. I am so convinced that many of my students could benefit from owning one of these systems that I have decided to become a dealer for DryFireUS. Be looking for more information on DryFire demos in your area or feel free to contact me if you have any questions or are interested in attending a demonstration.

Book Review

With Winning In Mind by Lanny Bassham

If you are serious about winning in competition, you MUST read this book.

If you were to survey the top competitive shooters in this country and ask them what is more important to winning - the physical or the mental part of the game; most would tell you the mental part of the game. Many top shooters have said that winning is 10% physical and 90% mental. If this is true, then why do so many competitive shooters continue to focus their time and money on the physical portion of the game that they have already mastered? If you can shoot 98 or 99 on a round of trap and skeet, shouldn't you be able to break 100? If you can break 8 targets on a sporting clays stand, shouldn't you be able to run all 10? The difference here is not usually the shooter's ability to point the shotgun but rather the inability to keep the mind on the task of shooting.

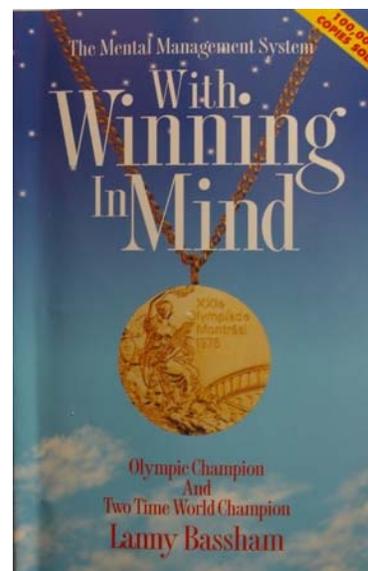
In my ongoing quest to help my intermediate and advanced students become champions, I immediately realized the importance of mental control, mental consistency and the need to integrate the mental game into my technical coaching. Through this quest, I discovered Lanny Bassham and the good folks at Mental Management Systems.

Lanny Bassham is a former Olympic international rifle shooter with many titles to his credit. In the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich, Lanny failed to earn the gold medal due to poor mental performance and instead, won the silver. After these games, he dedicated the next four years to surveying Olympic champions in many different sports to find out what they were doing to win and found that the common answer was mental control under pressure, on demand. Lanny Bassham then built the Mental Management System and went on to win the Olympic gold medal in Montreal in 1976. Lanny is now head of Mental Management Systems based out of Flower Mound, Texas and offers many books, audio CDs and seminars on Mental Management. His clients include top athletes in shotgun shooting, golf, archery and many other sports.

Lanny Bassham's flagship book, *With Winning in Mind* is a 162 page book that was designed to be read in a single sitting. The book costs about \$13 and is an introduction to all of the basic concepts of Mental Management*.

With Winning in Mind is laid out into four sections as follows:

1. What is Mental Management?
2. Building the Conscious Circle
3. Building the Subconscious Circle
4. Building the Self Image



The book does an outstanding job of explaining how all parts of the mind work together in pressure situations and I think any reader who shoots competition will be able to instantly relate to the simple concepts and principles laid out in the book.

In my opinion, two of the most valuable tools provided in the book are the chapters on goal setting and Performance Analysis. In my coaching experience, far too many shooters have high hopes of improvement, but absolutely zero plans to set goals and measure performance.

Without an organized, well thought-out plan, shooters can only hope to improve and at the end of the year have no way of measuring how or why they reached, or failed to reach their goals.

(Continued on page 7)

(With *Winning in Mind*: Continued from page 6)

For the price of about two boxes of shotgun shells you can be on your way to more winning performances. I would like to encourage you to contact Mental Management Systems, read this book in the off season and make a resolution to invest more on your mental game in 2006! If this book is a “wake-up call” for you, I would also highly recommend Lanny’s audio CD series, *Winning Sporting Clays – It’s All In Your Mind*. This 6-CD series is not just for sporting clays shooters but is also highly pertinent to the skeet and trap shooter.

Mental Management Systems can be reached at 1-800-879-5079, 1-972-899-9640 or at info@mentalmanagement.com. Online orders are also accepted at www.lannybassham.com.

*Mental Management is a registered trademark of Mental Management Systems and Lanny Bassham

Wingshooters Cookbook

Wild Duck Rumaki

Are you looking for a winning appetizer for this year’s Super Bowl party? Are you also looking for a way to use some of the duck meat in your freezer from last fall? Look no further! These little treats are traditionally made with chicken liver however duck is far more delicious in my opinion!!

Ingredients

- 2 boneless breast halves from one mallard-sized duck
- 1/2 cup good quality sake
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon peanut oil
- 1 teaspoon fresh ground ginger root
- 1lb lean, sliced bacon, cut into thirds
- 1 can whole water chestnuts
- Toothpicks

Cut each breast into ~1 inch cubes. Blend marinade ingredients and add duck. Marinate at room temperature for up to one hour or up to four hours refrigerated. Wrap a duck piece and a water chestnut with bacon, secure with toothpick. Repeat process for rest of duck. Broil on pan with edges or in a baking dish at 550° 3-4 inches from broiler for about 10 minutes, turning once to ensure bacon is crisp on all sides. Blot excess fat on paper towels and serve immediately for a guaranteed touchdown!!

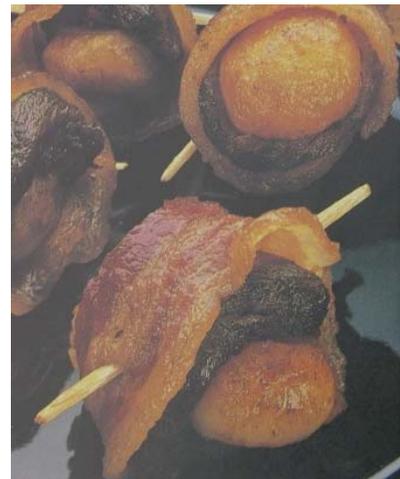


Photo from
Dressing and Cooking Wild Game

Young Guns

Youth Clay Shooting Programs are Expanding in Iowa

Ben Berka has been recently appointed as the Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) director of skeet and sporting clays in Iowa and is looking to grow youth clay target shooting statewide. The SCTP is a youth development program sponsored by the National Shooting Sports Foundation and its partners the Amateur Trapshooting Association, National Skeet Shooting Association and the National Sporting Clays Association. The program goals are to promote safe and responsible handling and storage of firearms, build character and citizenship development through teamwork and to introduce youth and their parents to a lifetime sport that families can enjoy together. Competitive divisions are split between the rookie division (5th graders and below), junior division (6th, 7th, and 8th graders) and senior division (9th – 12th graders). SCTP participants will have the opportunity to compete at the local and national levels.

If you or a youth you know are interested in participating in a youth clay shooting program in Iowa as either a participant or volunteer coach, please contact Ben Berka at Ben.Berka@AAshooting.com or at 515-201-8395. For more information on the Scholastic Clay Target Program, contact Ben Berka or visit the SCTP website at www.nssf.com/sctp.

Quick Shots: Local and Regional Wing and Clay Shooting News

ISU Pheasants Forever Banquet – February 10th

The Iowa State University chapter of Pheasants Forever will be hosting their 6th annual banquet on February 10th starting at 5:00PM at the Quality Inn and Suites in Ames, IA. Tickets include a 1 year Pheasants Forever membership and are \$40 for adults, \$35 for students and \$20 for spouses or members of another PF chapter. Some of the prizes include a Beretta 391 Ringneck and a Mathews bow. For tickets or more information call Dave Van Waus at 641-377-3480.

Scholastic Shooting Supplies Program, Spring 2006

The Scholastic Shooting Supplies Program (SSSP) was established to promote youth shooting by supplying members of youth shooting programs with high quality shotguns, ammunition and reloading supplies at low prices. The spring, 2006 sale is currently in progress and the order deadline is February 25. Contact Ben Berka for more information or to receive a program price list.

iowasportingclays.com

A new website is being developed as a resource for sporting clays shooters in the Midwest. Visit www.iowasportingclays.com for up-to-date shoot information, scheduling, results, delegate information and related web links.

Hunt Upland Birds Until March 31st

Don't hang up that shotgun quite yet! Iowa hunt clubs and hunting preserves are open until March 31st. For a complete listing of Iowa hunting preserves visit the Iowa DNR website at <http://www.iowadnr.com/wildlife/pdfs/iapreserves.pdf>

Upcoming Articles in *Iowa Sportsman* and *Permission to Hunt's Ultimate Outdoors*

Starting in the March issues, Ben Berka will be writing a series of articles for the *Iowa Sportsman* and *Permission to Hunt's Ultimate Outdoors*. The first article will cover the proper way to introduce youth to the clay target sports for the first time. The *Iowa Sportsman* is a free publication and can be picked up at any area Casey's General Store. For more information on these family-focused publications, or to subscribe, visit www.iowasportsman.com and www.permissiontohunt.com.

Clinic Dates Scheduled

Several dates and locations for AA Shooting Instruction Clinics have been scheduled for 2006. The current clinic schedule is as follows:

April 29 – Youth Sporting Clays Clinic at Marshalltown IWLA (Marshalltown, IA)

May 20/21 – Intermediate Sporting Clays at Doc's Hunt Club (Adel, IA)

June 3/4 - Intermediate Skeet Clinic at New Pioneer Gun Club (Waukee, IA)

June 10/11 – Introduction to Sporting Clays at Doc's Hunt Club (Adel, IA)

August 19 – Introduction to Skeet Shooting at New Pioneer Gun Club (Waukee, IA)

For more information on any of these clinics, or to register, contact Ben Berka or go online to www.AAshooting.com.

Shoot Calendar

Registered Shoots

May 30-June 4, NSCA US Open, Columbus, KS

June 23-25, Iowa State Skeet Shoot, Waukee, IA

July 21-23, Iowa State Sporting Clays Shoot, Merrill, IA

July 25-30, Iowa State Trapshoot, Cedar Falls, IA

August 8-18, Grand American Trapshoot, Sparta, IL

August 24-27, NSCA Zone 5 Sporting Clays, Johnson Creek, WI

September 1-4, Wickman Memorial Skeet Shoot, Waukee, IA

Collegiate Shoots

April 1/2, ISU Spring Fling Sporting Clays Shoot: Eddyville, IA

April 6-9, Intercollegiate Clay Target Championships: San Antonio, TX

April 28-30, Big 12 Trapshooting Championships at Kansas State

High School/Scholastic Shoots

April 29, Iowa High School Spring Trap Championships, Cedar Falls, IA

May 6, Iowa SCTP Trapshooting Championships, TBD

July 14-16, SCTP National Skeet and Sporting Clays Championships, Rochester, NY

To list your event in the Wing and Clay Flyer, contact Ben Berka at Ben.Berka@AAshooting.com or at 515-201-8395