

FIRST FREEDOM GROUP NATIONALS -- BEN AVERY PHOENIX ARIZONA

October 31 through November 2nd

We had 3 days of practice if you wanted them. However, the shooting conditions weren't conducive for serious load development. They were great, if you wanted to practice wind reading and holding off trying to shoot a small group. Temperatures for practice and the match were around 7 to 10 degrees above normal.; high 60's in the morning and around 90 late afternoon.

The match started off with the Unlimited 100 yard aggregate. For this event we shot 5 groups of 5 shots each group: a different format than the traditional Group shooting Nationals. My best guess is most everyone enjoyed the change in format. In addition we didn't rotate (move to a different bench) after each match (group) This made it much easier for us old guys to participate in the Unlimited class, where an unlimited gun can weigh in the 50/60 lb range. The shooting conditions were great. I for one thought we might see a zero agg shot. Well, it didn't happen but we did have some very nice aggregates shot. Leading off the match was Eric Stanton shooting a .070. There were 3 zero's shot in this match #1; Chuck Miller's .084 and Dana Andrus's .098 helped them both to getting off to a good start. Neither of them though managed to catch up to Eric as Eric shot 4 really nice groups the rest of the agg. Match winning groups for matches 2 through 5 were very good. Duke Rovarino shoot a .055 in match #2 for the small group of the aggregate. To give you a sense of the competition; we had 38 competitors shoot the Unlimited. There were 77 groups shot that were under .200 this equates to 40.5% of the groups. Eric Stanton and Chuck Miller were the only two shooters to shoot all 5 of their targets under .200. Eric did it best, shooting a .1282 with his largest target #3 a .162.



Eric Stanton Celebrating his blow out win smoking a cigar

Unlimited 100 Yard Aggregates

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|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Eric Stanton .1282 | 2. Dana Andrus .1462 |
| 3. Frank Smith .1522 | 4. Lester Bruno .1542 |
| 5. Chuck Miller .1546 | 6. Gary Ocock .1582 |
| 7. Cameron Snow .1584 | 8. Duke Rovarino .1592 |
| 9. Butch Fjoser .1686 | 10 Jarrod Hahn .1716 |

In the afternoon we shot the Light Varmint class 100 yards. Wind conditions were better than usual for the Ben Avery range. We had mild wind with slow changes in all directions with a few calms thrown in as well. Shooting small group for match #1 was Ernie Martin with a .130 close to Ernie in that match was local shooter Jarrod Hahn shooting a .133. In looking over the Bug Hole data of the yardage, I expected to see smaller aggregates than what were shot. Evidently the light winds were more deceiving than they appeared. Wining the LV 100 was California shooter Lawrence Weisdorn shooting a .2010 . Lawrence shot 3 ones, a low two and a mid two. Coming in second with the same group pattern was Lester Bruno, 3 ones, a low two and a mid two. Another California shooter passed on to me after the agg was finished his experience shooting this

aggregate. He started the agg shooting one bullet with poor results. He asked Chuck Miller if he had any extra bullets he could try and Chuck gave him some. He shot those in matches 4 and 5. He shot small groups and won both matches shooting a .145 in match #4 and a small group for the yardage in match #5 a .122. My guess is Chuck just picked up another customer for his bullets.



Lawrence Weisdorn reloading for the next day.

Light Varmint 100 Yard aggregates

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|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Lawrence Weisdorn 2010 | 2. Lester Bruno .2136 |
| 3. Ed Adams .2208 | 4. Justin Young .2326 |
| 5. Duke Rovarino .2328 | 6. Joel Nader .2350 |
| 7. Ernie Martin .2426 | 8. Jarrod Hahn .2534 |
| 9. Butch Fjoser .2558 | 10 Kendal Hughes .2586 |

Saturday morning, we shot the Heavy Varmint class, first at 100 yards. Shooting conditions were very similar as the day before, mild for Phoenix. Light breezes with direction changes and a few lulls as well. If you were in a competitive state of mind and were paying attention you could pick an easy condition and shoot a good group. Doing it best was Vegas native Joel Nader. Joel didn't start off in match #1 the best, but he picked up his performance in matches 2,3 and 4. He shot a .113 (match winner) in #2, a .141 in #3 and a .138 in match #4. His last target was a .242 a slight slip up but those 5 or 6 shooters close to Joel didn't shoot very well in match #5 as well and Joel held on for the win. The average group size for the top 5 shooters who finished with .1+++ aggs was .250 in match 5. I didn't do the math, but a quick glance tells me that if one of those shooters shot a very low one they might have beat Joel; but we didn't and Joel is the Heavy Varmint Freedom National Champion. Small group for the yardage was a .099 shot by Lester Bruno in match #3. Also of note is Joel shot his Light Varmint rifle in this Heavy Varmint match. Looking at the stat sheet the conditions for match #5 must have been tricky as there were only 5 one groups shot, Dan 6Br Sutton and Bob Wilkari did good shooting .144 and .154 respectively. Lawrence Weisdorn did it best on the last match shooting a match winner of .129.



Heavy Varmint 100 Yard Aggregates

1. Joel Nader .1738
2. Eric Stanton .1818
3. Lester Bruno .1826
4. Gary Ocock .1920
5. Lou Murdica .1978
6. Doug Ruble .2036
7. Duke Rovarino .2124
8. Ed Adams .2248
9. Justin Young .2278
10. Dan 6Br Sutton .2320

Joel Nader trying to look movie starish with the shades

Once we finished with 100 yard aggregates we took a break for lunch and moved the target frames to 200 a quick lunch and reloaded for the 200 yard stage of the Heavy Varmint class. The shooting conditions were again on the light side but I believe it was easy to get fooled into thinking that slight change with the wind wouldn't mean that much. Well that was the case most of the time but a few shooters realized that those slight changes were important if you wanted to shoot under .400. It was possible but you had to be very careful; mistakes made weren't killers but it was easy to go from a .300 to a high 5 or a low 6 with those slight changes. The winner of the Heavy Varmint 200 yard agg was Ed Adams shooting a .2229. Ed shot 3 high threes a mid four and a very low six. Eric Stanto who at this point was shooting very competitive finished in second place shootin a .2252. Eric had 2 high threes, a low four and 2 low fives. Eric finished the aggregate shooting his threes on targets 4 and 5. The rest of the top 10 shooters all had a least one target at the .600 range or higher. Small group for the yardage was Jim Wheeler shooting a .231 in match #2. Jim gets the bounce back award for starting the aggregate with a .822 and the shooting the small group .231 in match #2. Honorable mention for bounce back award goes to Jarrod Hahn who shot a nasty 1.251 in match 3 but shot small group for match #5 shooting a .301. After 4 targets Jarrod had an aggregate of .3287; shooting that .301 in match 5 lowered his agg to 2931; not what he was looking for at the start but a very good move at the end.



Heavy Varmint 200 yard Aggregate top 10

1. Ed Adams .2229
2. Eric Stanton .2252
3. Butch Fjoser .2497
4. Dan 6Br Sutton .2547
5. Doug Ruble .2560
6. Duke Rovarino .2627
7. Jim Wheeler .2642
8. Lou Murdica .2656
9. Joel Nader .2660
10. Bob Wiikari 2692

Sunday, we started off with the Light Varmint 200 yard stage. In the afternoon we shot the Unlimited 200 yards. The shooting conditions were very much like Saturday the day before; light winds with a few angle changes, light pick ups in the wind but nothing punishing by any means. Most of us local shooters were amazed that we had 3 days of the light but tricky conditions. Starting the aggregate with a bang was Justin Young who shot a .191; that group turned out to be the small group for the agg. We had 42 shooters start the day and most were shooting respectable 200 yard groups. The competition was keen between the top 4 shooters. In the end. Ernie Martin was the top shooter winning the Light Varmint Championship shooting a .2047. Ernie shot 3 fours, a mid 3 and a match winning .282 in match #4. The top three shooters each had a match winner in their aggregate. 6Br Sutton finished 2nd in the agg shooting a .306 to win match #5. Courtney Sorenson finished 4th in the agg, shot steady with a .2169 but just didn't get the small one to move him up to contend for the win. Taking a quick glance at the printout of the LV 200 yardage I noticed there were very few 1 inch groups shot. More than half the shooters shot under .3000 for their agg. I'm sure many of the shooters walked away from the bench after a few matches and said to themselves if I get one really small group I could be in contention for the win. Sometimes it just doesn't happen

Ernie Martin so excited he reloads standing up.



Light Varmint 200 Yard Aggregate Top 10

1. Ernie Martin .2047
2. Dan 6Br Sutton .2074
3. Justin Young .2095
4. Courtney Sorenson .2169
5. Duke Rovarino .2305
6. Jim Wheeler .2321
7. Bob Wiikari .2343
8. Jesse Ramirez .2390
9. Lester Bruno .2505
10. Jarrod Hahn .2512

The final aggregate of the match was the 200 Unlimited 5 shot. The shooting conditions remained the same, mild winds with slow changes. It took a nice low/mid .200 to win a match until Eric Stanton shot a .193 in match #5 for small group for the aggregate. We had six shooters shoot in the one's for an aggregate. These were 5 shot matches and I for one think this is the way to go. The upside of 5 shots vs 10 is its fun to shoot the small groups and again it provides some fun for shooters who have a rail in tune to shoot small groups, which is what we are trying to do no matter how many shots we shoot. The added benefit for many; it provides a level of confidence that they can shoot small groups with the components they have; they just have to learn how to do it with a bag gun. In my opinion it can reduce the learning curve for group shooting by 2 years. Enough politicking for more unlimited 5 shot matches. As I mentioned earlier Eric Stanton shot small group of the yardage he also started this yardage off winning the first match shooting a .243. There were several of us close to Eric shooting mid two's as well. Looking of the raw data I can see there were

many shooters shooting nice .200 and .300 size groups. The challenge was to do it for all five targets. Leading the pack was myself shooting a .1561 for first place This agg was helped by shooting the second smallest target of the match a .208 in match #4. Dana Andrus did a good job as well shooting two .200 size groups along with two .300 size groups and a high .400. Eric Stanton did an outstanding job for 4 targets but his mid .500 in match #3 hurt his aggregate. At this point I'm compelled to tell a story of what I did during this stage of the event. In match #3 I had the first 3 shots in a hole maybe a low .200. The condition changed after the first 2 shots and not having any patience any more I held over about a bullet hole for the third shot. I proceeded to load the 4th shot into the action, but before I fired the shot I decided to look to see if I held enough for the 3rd shot. As I leaned forward to look through the scope my brain decide I should pull the trigger. The round fired and my rail slides really easy; the scope recoiled onto my right eyebrow. When this happened, I jerked my head back; I usually stop the slide of my rail with my thumb; this time I used my face. Chuck Miller was shooting next to me and got a good chuckle of the event. I ended up with .311 group so it wasn't a disaster, but I don't recommend this style of shooting a rail. I ended up with a blood blister on my eyebrow for about a week.



Gary Ocock smiling to hide the embarrassment of using his right eyebrow to stop the rail on recoil

Unlimited 5-shot 200 yard aggregates

1. Gary Ocock .1561
2. Dana Andrus .1655
3. Eric Stanton .1693
4. Chuck Miller .1799
5. Lester Bruno .1909
6. Ed Adams .1944
7. Dave Woodward .2090
8. Cameron Snow .2117
9. Duke Rovarino .2123
10. Bob Wiikari .2130

Light Varmint Grand

1. Justin Young .2211
2. Ernie Martin .2237
3. Duke Rovarino .2317
4. Lester Bruno .2320
5. Ed Adams .2361
6. Courtney Sorenson .2396
7. Joel Nader .2446
8. Jarrod Hahn .2523
9. Jim Wheeler .2539
10. Lawrence Weisdorn .2554

Heavy Varmint Grand

1. Eric Stanton .2035
2. Joel Nader .2199
3. Ed Adams .2239
4. Doug Ruble .2298
5. Lou Murdica .2317
6. Gary Ocock .2369
7. Duke Rovarino .2375
8. Lester Bruno .2422
9. Dan Sutton .2433
10. Jim Wheeler .2509

Unlimited-5 Grand

1. Eric Stanton .1487
2. Dana Andrus .1559
3. Gary Ocock .1572
4. Chuck Miller .1672
5. Lester Bruno .1726
6. Cameron Snow .1851
7. Duke Rovarino .1858
8. Frank Smith .1975
9. Jim Wheeler .2092
10. Ed Adams .2152



Justin Young and Eric Stanton with their
Trophies for the Grand Aggregates

3 Gun

1. Eric Stanton .2135
2. Lester Bruno .2156
3. Duke Rovarino .2183
4. Gary Ocock .2235
5. Ed Adams .2250
6. Joel Nader .2357
7. Jim Wheeler .2380
8. Jarrod hahn .2536
9. Lawrence Weisdorn .2599
10. Bob Wiikari .2611
11. Butch Fjoser .2637
12. Ernie Martin .2649
13. Dana Andrus .2662
14. Doug Ruble .2684
15. Dan Sutton .2706
16. Chuck Miller .2754
17. Jerry Carter .2789
18. Courtney Sorenson .2793
19. Frank Smith .2797
20. Rodney Brown .2912



Eric Stanton and Ed Adams with their
3GUN and 2GUN Trophies

2Gun

1. Ed Adams .2300
2. Joel Nader .2323
3. Duke Rovarino .2346
4. Lester Bruno .2371
5. Eric Stanton .2459
6. Justin Young .2485
7. Jim Wheeler .2524
8. Ernie Martin .2525
9. Gary Ocock .2566
10. Dan Sutton .2579
11. Lawrence Weisdorn .2683
12. Jarrod Hahn .2698
13. Butch Fjoser .2733
14. Courtney Sorenson .2754
15. Bob Wiikari .2815
16. Lou Murdica .2875
17. Doug Ruble .2920
18. Kendall Hughes .2984
19. Jerry Carter .2993
20. Ken Jackson .3077