

## Walt Berger Memorial Benchrest Match – Phoenix, Arizona Jan/Feb 2026

This is a 3 gun match where we shoot 100 and 200 yards at the same time. The competitors are divided in 2 groups as we put up both sets of frames. The shooters are encouraged to partner up with someone to share flags. In addition this match includes a team event. The teams are made up by the event staff with the hope that no particular team will dominate the event and for the most part it has worked out that way. The team aggregates are computed by using 3 scores from one shooter and 2 from the other. This is done for each yardage. In the end there is a 3-gun agg for the team with \$100 going to each member of the team. It is my understanding this will take place again next year; so plan on attending; it's also a warm-up for the Cactus Classic held each year the following month

First off was the Unlimited-5 with shooters shooting at both yardages. One team member was shooting at 100 yards and the other at 200. However, before this we had 2 days of practice with shooting conditions were challenging at times. The wind conditions for the UNL 100/200 start were challenging, as we had the early morning winds coming at us from the north. Not only was the wind coming straight at us with force but we also had angle changes as well. I started the match shooting at 200 yards. At one point I shot in what I thought was a slight wind angle change on my sighter in order to see what kind of drift we were looking at. I was amazed; a slight angle change moved the bullet 3-4 inches. At this point I could see it was going to be a challenge to shoot a competitive aggregate. As it turned out shooters that started the UNL agg with the 100 had an advantage over those that started the match at 200. The wind let up after about 2+ hours and for the rest of the day we had somewhat manageable wind conditions. I shot the afternoon conditions for my 100 yards. I ended up shooting 2 zero groups one of those a .071 in match #2 for small group of the yardage. Lester Bruno did a nice job finishing third in the 100 yards while shooting in the morning winds.

### Unlimited-5 100 yards

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|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Gary Ocock .1376   | 2. Chuck Miller .1710     |
| 3. Lester Bruno .1948 | 4. Jim Aylor .2390        |
| 5. Jarrod Hahn .2556  | 6. Doug Ruble .2556       |
| 7. Eric Stanton .2688 | 8. Earl Horgeshimer .2856 |
| 9. Lou Murdica .2916  | 10. Paul Weaver .3000     |

The wind conditions after about 2+ hrs the wind from the north disappeared and we had the usual right to left or the other way around all with slight angle changes. In my opinion it was very easy to miss those angle changes along with varying wind speeds. Lester Bruno and Dana Andrus shot very well at 200. The small group for the 200 yardage a .235 was shot by Lester Bruno, shot in the pm session winning match #5. It took a low .3 to win 4 of the 5 matches at 200 yards. We had 30 shooters shoot the UNL match. Of note we had a new shooter; Michael Zeman to group shooting benchrest (first match ever) who shot very respectable for most of his groups ending up in 8<sup>th</sup> place at 200 yards.

### Unlimited-5 200 yards

- |                        |                         |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Lester Bruno .1867  | 2.. Dana Andrus .1998   |
| 3. Duke Rovarino .2530 | 4. Eric Stanton .2725   |
| 5. Paul Weaver .2866   | 6. Frank Smith .2890    |
| 7. Kelly Ellis .3075   | 8. Michael Zeman .3236  |
| 9. Chuck Miller .3455  | 10 Kendall Hughes .3548 |

The Unlimited-5 Grand was won by Lester Bruno shooting a very nice .1908 for the wind conditions we experienced through out the day. Lesters win was 67 thousands better than second place Chuck Miller's .2582, a dominating performance for sure. Temperature for the day was very comfortable for this time of year; it would have been a great day if we didn't have that strong early morning wind coming off the mountain. It's hard to tell if the shooters are on board with the format, because of the team

concept and shooting both yardage on the same day and that it's a different concept I think most in the end were OK with the event.

#### Unlimited-5 Grand

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|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Lester Bruno .1908 | 2. Chuck Miller .2582 |
| 3. Eric Stanton .2706 | 4. Gary Ocock .2912   |
| 5. Paul Weaver .2933  | 6. Duk Rovarino .3042 |
| 7. Dana Andrus .3101  | 8. Kelly Ellis .3175  |
| 9. Frank Smith .3381  | 10. Ed Adams .3415    |

After the first day's Unlimited match the Team of Michael Zeman and Lester Bruno was in first place in the Team Competition with a score/agg of .1830. In second place was the team of Chuck Miller and Kelly Ellis with an agg/score of .1975. Third place was Eric Stanton and Dana Andrus with an agg of .1999. No real run away for any of the teams, so the matching up of the team shooters kept it competitive.

Day 2 of the match we shot the Light Varmint match. Shooters started the LV match where they left off the day before (UNL). If you finished the UNL at 100 you started the LV at 100, then rotated to the other yardage. The winds were readable but stronger than the mild winds forecasted, my guess and the weather underground said it was varying from 7 to 12 mph with slow angle changes. The winds did pick up as the day wore on though. When the clouds disappeared we did get some mirage, but nothing compared to some ranges. Ed Adams continued his good shooting winning the 100 yard aggregate with a nice .1722. Finishing second to Ed was Lester Bruno who shot a .1736. Ed won the 100 yard aggregate on his last target as he shot a .153 while Lester shot a .196. Small group for the 100 yard Light was a .125 shot by the new guy Michael Zeman in match #5.

#### Light Varmint 100 yards

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|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Ed Adams .1722     | 2. Lester Bruno .1736   |
| 3. Paul Snow .2164    | 4. Joel Nader .2170     |
| 5. Eric Stanton .2186 | 6. Lou Murdica .2256    |
| 7. Gary Ocock .2316   | 8. Bud Mundy .2406      |
| 9. Dana Andrus .2526  | 10. Duke Rovarino .2542 |

The afternoon LV we rotated and shot the other yardage of the LV Grand; some shot 100 yards and others shot 200. The 200 was won by Joel Nader shooting a nice .2280 aggregate. Joel did it shooting a .299 and winning match #1. His agg consisted 4 decent targets with one a little sloppy a .639 in match #2; however everyone who was in contention also had at least one sloppy target. In second place was Ed Adams who shot a .2370; Ed also had a sloppy target a .694 in match #3; he did come back shooting a .396 in match #5. There weren't that many 1 inch groups in the top half of the results but many came close with big .8's and .9's. Shooting small group for the LV 200 yards was Hector Elias Jr shooting a .228 in match #5. Hector is a local shooter who has been preloading for the matches for years. I'm sure he gets a kick out doing well coming the matches preloaded for the day.

#### Light Varmint 200 yards

- |                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Joel Nader .2280    | 2. Ed Adams .2370      |
| 3. Jim Wheeler .2473   | 4. Eric Stanton .2492  |
| 5. Casey Seaton .2660  | 6. Jim Aylor .2662     |
| 7. Lester Bruno .2814  | 8. Kelly Ellis .2972   |
| 9. Michael Zeman .3019 | 10. Chuck Miller .3062 |

The Light Varmint Grand was won by Ed Adams with shooting a .2046. Ed's grand was nearly 18 thousands better than Joel Naders. Ed won the grand with a good performance at 100 yards. That's not the usual situation as most grand aggregates are won because of the 200 yard performance.

### Light Varmint Grand

- |                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Ed Adams .2046     | 2. Joel Nader .2225    |
| 3. Lester Bruno .2275 | 4. Eric Stanton .2339  |
| 5. Jim Wheeler .2637  | 6. Lou Murdica .2688   |
| 7. Jim Aylor .2797    | 8. Gary Ocock .2821    |
| 9. Paul Snow .2882    | 10. Chuck Miller .2890 |

Winning the Team Light Varmint Grand agg was team Casey Seaton and Ed Adams with a Grand of .1914. In second place was Lester Bruno and Michael Zeman with a team agg of .1998 . Third place was won by team Eric Stanton and Dana Andrus with an aggregate of .2045. Again these team aggregates consist of scores from both members; at least 4 groups must be used by one of the team members.

The start of the third day of the match we shot from the same bench as we finished the day before. The weather forecasted was for mild winds a few clouds and some sunshine; temps in the high 60's to low 80's. The weather did most of what was forecasted except that the winds were at times stronger than forecasted. For several hours we had plenty of cloud cover and at times it looked like it might rain and then around noon it mostly cleared up. The 100 yard HV was won by Ed Adams who shot a nice .2148 finishing in front of Mr. Preload Hector Elias Jr. who shot a .2508. Big win for Ed. Finishing in third place was Eric Stanton who shot a .2560. Hector jumped a bunch of shooters by shooting a .089 in match #5 that turned out to be small group for the yardage. Hector's .089 was by far the smallest group as other match winners all were in the mid .150 range. Hector showed again you don't have to load at the range in order to be competitive.

### Heavy Varmint 100 yards

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|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Ed Adams .2148      | 2. Mr Preload Hector Elias Jr. .2508 |
| 3. Eric Stanton .2560  | 4. Lester Bruno .2638                |
| 5. Michael Zeman .2718 | 6. Dan 6Br Sutton .2782              |
| 7. Chuck Miller .2790  | 8. Kendall Hughes .2848              |
| 9. Lou Murdica .2956   | 10. Jim Wood .3146                   |

In typing up this report it jumped out at me that new shooter Michael Zeman shot his 6ppc benchrest rifle maybe for a few weeks prior to the match. Mike finished 5<sup>th</sup> place, however he started the agg with a mid .500 group; not a very good start. He didn't let that get him down and proceeded to shoot back to back match winning groups of .151 and .188 in matches #2 and #3; he also finished the yardage shooting .186 in match #5. That's what it takes to become a constant competitive group shooter. No pressure; as while I was hanging targets for the match, Mike was at the walling wall letting me know how much fun he was having. Looks like we have another dedicated local shooter to give the out of towners a run for their money.

After a quick lunch of hot dogs paid for by an anonymous benefactor. we again moved to the other yardage what ever that was. Winning the 200 yard stage was Dan 6Br Sutton who shot the only aggregate under .3000. His aggregate was significantly helped when he shot a match winning group of .325 in match #5. That turned out to be small group for the 200 yard stage of the Heavy Varmint class. Finishing in second place was Ed Adams who shot a .3188 aggregate. Ed had the lead after 4 targets but Br Sutton got Ed on the last target by shooting a low .3 to Ed low .7. Finishing in third place was Michael (New Guy) Zeman who shot a .3200. Mike also won 2 matches in this aggregate; #1 with a .384 and #3 with a .487. Fantastic shooting (especially), for his first time at a registered match.

### Heavy Varmint 200 yards

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|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Dan Sutton .2883     | 2. Ed Adams .3188     |
| 3. Michael Zeman .3200  | 4. Lester Bruno .3227 |
| 5. Kendall Hughes .3236 | 6. Jim Wheeler .3522  |
| 7. Eric Stanton .3601   | 8. Paul Weaver .3666  |

9. Joel Nader .3841

10. Bud Mundy .3868

Winning the Heavy Varmint Grand aggregate was Ed Adams shooting a .2668. In second place was Dan Sutton with a .2833 and in third place was Lester Bruno who finished with a .2932. I'm compelled to point out that new shooter Mike Zeman finished just behind his mentor Lester Bruno shooting a .2959. Lester is one of the best group shooters in the country over a 30/40 year period and his protégé gave him a run at the grand agg.

#### Heavy Varmint Grand

1. Ed Adams .2668

2. Dan Sutton .2833

3. Lester Bruno .2932

4. Michael Zeman .2959

5. Kendall Hughes .3042

6. Eric Stanton .3081

7. Jim Wheeler .3466

8. Bud Mundy .3519

9. Lou Murdica .3528

10. Paul Weaver .3561

Winning the Heavy Varmint Team Grand was Lester Bruno and Michael Zeman with a .2123. In second place was the team of Ed Adams and Casey Seaton with a Grand agg of .2488. Third place team was Kendall Hughes and Jim Aylor who had a grand of 2524.

We awarded a standard 2 Gun consisting of LV and HV. Winning this was Ed Adams shooting a nice for the conditions .2357; besting Lester Bruno's .2604. In third place was Oregon's Eric Stanton who shot a.2710.

#### 2- Gun (HV-LV) Individual shooter results

1. Ed Adams .2357

2. Lester Bruno .2604

3. Eric Stanton .2710

4. Jim Wheeler .3051

5. Dan Sutton .3055

6. Michael Zeman .3063

7. Joel Nader .3090

8. Lou Murdica .3108

9. Bud Mundy .3231

10. Kendall Hughes .3281

The big prize the 3-Gun was won by Lester Bruno with a big margin over Eric Stanton. Lesters 3-gun aggregate was .2372 a whopping 33 thousands over Eric's .2709. The Unlimited Grand is what gave Lester the nice margin of victory. Lester shot 2 nice one aggs in the unlimited, while Eric shot 2 mid .2500 aggs in the unlimited.

#### 3-Gun (UNL-HV-LV) Individual shooter results

1. Lester Bruno .2372

2. Eric Stanton .2709

3. Ed Adams .2710

4. Chuck Miller .3134

5. Paul Weaver .3169

6. Joel Nader .3253

7. Kelly Ellis .3364

8. Michael Zeman .3550

9. Lou Murdica .3555

10. Jim Wheeler 3638

The Team 3-Gun was won by Lester Bruno and Michael Zeman with a .1984; both of them received a \$100 cash prize. Second place went to the Chuck Miller and Kelly Ellis team with a way back aggregate of .2415. Third place went to the team of Eric Stanton and Dana Andrus posting a .2426. For you statistics nerds like me, Bruno and Zeman's winning aggregate was a blow out win. The balance of the team competition was competitively close from 2<sup>nd</sup> place through the top 12 places. The aggregates of the Unlimited (first day) that had the worst conditions had the most impact in where each team finished. The saving grace was that in the team competition you could through out 50% of the groups as long as each team members groups were used a minimum of 40% of the time. This allow each of the team members to have a really crappy few groups and not punish the team too bad.