

## The Inaugural Freedom Benchrest Match at Ben Avery October 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> 2025

The match was a Light Varmint and Heavy Varmint. Rules and match format was as NBRSA/IBS uses. We had 2 days for practice prior to the match. Weather/shooting conditions for both practice and match were on the tricky side with lulls and switching winds. The temperature each day started out mid 70's however for the practice days temps rose to over 100 degrees by noonish. Saturday we had high's near 95 with Sunday 200 yards we had a high of 90. For some unexplained reason we had some of the trickiest mirage I've ever experienced at Ben Avery.

Saturday we started the match shooting 100 yards Light Varmint. Lester Bruno won the first Match shooting a .161, there was only one other one group shot that match a .193 shot by part time Az resident Dan Sutton. We had 17 shooters for the match; including 2 new shooters for group competition, Bob Kruff and Ed Serich. For each of the remaining 4 matches it was challenging to shoot a one group; however in match 3 Ross Mccollum a relatively new shooter did a great job shooting a .117 witch turned out to be small group for the LV 100 aggregate. Winning the aggregate was bullet maker Chuck Miller with a .2066 aggregate. Chuck shot did it by shooting 2 ones in matches 3 and 4; a .155 and .164 respectively. In second place was Jim Wheeler shooting a .2314 and in third was Lester Bruno with a .2520.

### Light Varmint 100 yard aggregates

- |                          |                         |                        |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Chuck Miller .2066    | 2. Jim Wheeler .2314    | 3. Lester Bruno .2520  |
| 4. Duke Rovarino .2594   | 5. Jim Aylor .2660      | 6. Lou Murdica .2782   |
| 7. Hector Elias Jr .2862 | 8. Dan 6br Sutton .2990 | 9. Ross McCollum .3036 |



Picture of Chuck Miller Light Varmint Champion reloading; getting ready for the HV 100 after he won the LV. You can see he's using Federal Primers. He also isn't weighing his powder. I overheard one of the shooters tell Chuck he would have shot a smaller aggregate if he weighed his powder charges. Little did the shooter know that Chuck wasn't wearing his hearing aid so the conversation was for not. One of the things that Chuck does well though is he makes good bullets and sometimes points them in the right direction

After a lunch break we shot the Heavy Varmint 100 yard aggregate. Shooting conditions in the afternoon as usual in Arizona changed for the worse. We had some stronger winds along with angle changes and let-ups. In addition the mirage made it a challenge to be sure if you were holding the crosshairs especially if you were trying to hold for a wind condition. The HV 100 turned into the Lester Bruno show. Lester was loading next the Chuck and at one point I saw Lester talking in Chucks ear; I'm not saying he was trying to figure out what powder charge Chuck was using; but it looked suspicious. What ever info Lester got from Chuck it worked better for Lester than it did for Chuck. Lester started off the yardage with a .218; not very impressive but it was still a match #1 small group. Les then shot a .174 in match #2 but came in second in that match to Hector Elias Jr. who shot a .136. For those that don't know, Hector preloads at home and many times he is very competitive. At this point Lester took over the match shooting small groups in the remaining matches; #3-4-5. He shot .157, .181 and a .209 to win those matches. In all he won 4 of the 5 matches and the one he didn't win he was second. You can see from the agg scores that Lester dominated the HV 100; winning by 92 thousands.

#### Heavy Varmint 100 yard aggregates

- |                        |                          |                         |
|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Lester Bruno .1878  | 2. Lou Murdica .2804     | 3. Dan 6br Sutton .2818 |
| 4. Duke Rovarino .2834 | 5. Jim Wheeler .2936     | 6. Chuck Miller .3424   |
| 7. Ross McCollum .3520 | 8. Hector Elias Jr. 3554 | 9. Cameron Snow .3554   |



Picture: Lester; seated telling Earl Horgeshimer who usually shoots the local Ben Avery matches, but was instructed by his wife they were going out of town to attend a wedding and visit their son. Les told him that one shot in match #2 where he shot a .174, he had 4 shots close to a zero and should have won all 5 matches in this aggregate. You can't tell but Earl is starting to hold onto the reloading bench because he was starting to laugh and was afraid his knees were going to buckle. At this point I am compelled to explain what I did in match #5. I'm doing this so that who ever reads this will understand that things can happen and maybe they won't make the same mistake that I did. This day at 100 yards I wasn't shooting very competitive and at some point I lost focus of what I was doing. My attitude took a dump and I started to just pull the trigger without any match strategy. For the last match #5 when the match commenced fire the wind conditions were very light. I fired 5 shots as quick as I could on the record. My 5 shots measured a .139; most know where this is going; yup I shot all 5 shots on my neighbors target; even before he realized I was shooting on his record target. The bad part of this it was on one of our new shooters; shooting his first benchrest match. I

hope I apologized but if I didn't I am now. The lesson learned is just because I was having a bad day if I was paying attention I most likely wouldn't have made it crapy for someone else.

Sunday we shot the 200 yard stages of the match, starting off with the Heavy Varmint; where we left off Saturday. The weather/shooting conditions were similar to Saturday however the temps in the morning were much more comfortable. The temperature for the start of the match was slightly over 70 degrees. It did warm up quickly though with a temp of about 88 at the end of the match. Winds were about the same 7-12 mph with a few more lulls than yesterday. It seemed for a few of the matches the wind died down just as each match ended. Starting off with a bang was Lester Bruno shooting a .282 and wining match #1. However Les didn't back that group up and the winner of the HV 200 Duke Rovarino shot a .213 in match #2; that was small group for this aggregate as well. In all Duke won 2 matches. Coming on strong was Jim Wheeler shooting a .312 in match #3, Jim also finished strong shooting a .364 in match #5. That group wasn't quite good enough to help him win the aggregate as Duke held on for the win shooting a .511 in match 5, finishing the aggregate with a .2214. It turned out to be a 2 man race for the win as Duke finished just 7 thousands ahead of Jim. Both shot nice aggregates for the tricky conditions. It's interesting that both of these two competitors have similar shooting styles; they both have intense concentration and patience while watching the conditions.



Duke Heavy Varmint 200 yard champion next to the Walt Berger memorial boulder.

#### Heavy Varmint 200 Yard aggregates

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|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Duke Rovarino .2214 | 2. Jim Wheeler .2286    | 3. Lester Bruno .2634    |
| 4. Jerrod Hahn .2860   | 5. Lou Murdica .2921    | 6. Hector Elias Jr. 3042 |
| 7. Gary Ocock .3130    | 8. Dan 6br Sutton .3278 | 9. Jim Aylor .3330       |

The Heavy Varmint Grand Aggregate wasn't a complete runaway but Lester Bruno won convincing with a first place at 100 yards and a third place at 200. His 100 yard aggregate was very strong and contrary to most matches propelled him to victory in the Grand. Usually it's the 200 yard aggregates that push the

winner in the Grand. The competition at 200 yards though helped Duke Rovarino and Jim Wheeler to finish 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> respectively.

#### Heavy Varmint Grand Aggregates

- |                       |                        |                           |
|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Lester Bruno .2256 | 2. Duke Rovarino .2524 | 3. Jim Wheeler .2611      |
| 4. Lou Murdica .2863  | 5. Dan Sutton .3048    | 6. Hector Elias Jr. .3298 |
| 7. Jarrod Hahn .3329  | 8. Chuck Miller .3491  | 9. Ross McCollum .3563    |

After the Heavy 200 we took a short break and then shot the Light Varmint 200. As I noted earlier the shooting conditions picked up and the aggregates will show this, If you were patient though and had your wits about you there were moments during the 7 minuet time period to shoot a competitive group, however looking at the groups shot nearly everyone had a slipup group in their aggregate. No one ran away with agg. Jim Wheeler won the agg shooting a match winning target in match #5 a .377. That group moved him into first place. I'm compelled to point out that my friend Lester Bruno was way ahead after 3 targets. I was shooting Next to Lester and watch him shot many targets. On his 4<sup>th</sup> target he had 3 shots in a nice triangle very close to where his previous groups printed. BTW he won the 2 previous groups shooting a .422 and a small group for the yardage .282. His 4<sup>th</sup> shot flew out so far to the right that we both after a few moments started to laugh. Neither one of us could figure that one out. After that he did shoot the second smallest group in match #5 a .550 however Jim Wheeler's match winner .377 pushed Lester into second place. In looking over the stat sheet I noticed that many shooters had nice groups but nearly everyone had an ugly group in their agg even Jim Wheeler shot a .916 in match #2; he did though shoot 2 threes; a .353 in match #3 and the .377 in match #5.



Jim Wheeler Light Varmint 200 yard Champion – just look at that intensity

#### Light Varmint 200 yard aggregates

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|--------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Jim Wheeler .2987     | 2. Lester Bruno .3095  | 3. Jim Aylor .3113  |
| 4. Chuck Miller .3318    | 5. Duke Rovarino .3324 | 6. Dan Sutton .3372 |
| 7. Hector Elias Jr. 3497 | 8. Jarrod Hahn .3535   | 9. Gary Ocock .3535 |

The Light varmint Grand was a contest between the two yardage winners Chuck Miller who won the 100 and Jim Wheeler who won the 200. In this case as is most often the 200 yard winner came out the winner for the LV Grand Aggregate. We has 5 shooters shoot under .3 for the grand slightly better than the 4 shooters who finished under .3 in the Heavy Varmint class.

#### Light Varmint Grand Aggregates

- |                         |                        |                          |
|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Jim Wheeler .2651    | 2. Chuck Miller .2692  | 3. Lester Bruno .2807    |
| 4. Jim Aylor .2887      | 5. Duke Rovarino .2959 | 6. Hector Elias Jr. 3179 |
| 7. Dan 6br Sutton .3181 | 8. Lou Murdica .3354   | 9. Jarrod Hahn .3462     |

The 2 Gun was contested by the 2 Grand aggregate winner with Duke Rovarino placing 3<sup>rd</sup>. Lester Bruno won the 2-Gun as a result of his blow away the rest of the competitors in the 100 yard Heavy Varmint contest. Duke was in contention but fell back to 3<sup>rd</sup> with his 5<sup>th</sup> place at LV 200. Jim Wheeler who finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 2-Gun shot steady with all 4 of his aggregates in the twos. The top 2 were both Grand Aggregate winners.

#### 2-Gun Aggregate LV-HV

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|---------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Lester Bruno .2532     | 2. Jim Wheeler .2631 | 3. Duke Rovarino .2742 |
| 4. Chuck Miller .3091     | 5. Lou Murdica .3109 | 6. 6br Sutton .3114    |
| 7. Hector Elias Jr. .3239 | 8. Jarrod Hahn .3396 | 9. Cameron Snow .3838  |

Picture of the both Grand Aggregate winners

Lester Bruno (L) Heavy Varmint Jim Wheeler Light Varmint



# Equipmet List

## Ben Avery AZ. Light Varmint

Place		Aggregate	Cal	BARREL	STOCK	STOCKER	ACTION	GUNSMITH	POWDER	BULLET-Wt	Seat depth
1	Jim Wheeler	0.2651	6ppc	Bartlein	Bru/Mcm	Bruno	BAT	Ocock		Miller 65	On
2	Chuck Miller	0.2692	6ppc	Krieger	Marsh/mcm	Miller	BAT	Miller	133	Miller 65	On
3	Lester Bruno	0.2807	6ppc	Krieger	Scarborough	Lester	Mavrick	Lester	29.2 8208	Lester 68	On
4	Jim Aylor	0.2887	6ppc	Bartlein	Scoville		BAT	Aylor	133	Miller 65	On
5	Duke Rovarino	0.2959	6ppc	HWP	Scarborough	Scarborough	BAT	Ocock	29 133	Miller 65	On
6	Hector Elias Jr.	0.3179	6ppc	Krieger	Mcmillan	Ocock	BAT	Brackney	30 BL-C2	Miller 65	Off
7	Dan Sutton	0.3181	6 BR	Krieger	Mcmillan	Sutton	BAT	Sutton	29.5 8208	Berger 65	On
8	Lou Murdica	0.3354	6ppc	Bartlein	Kelby	Kelbly	Panda	Sosenko	29 133	Murdica	On
9	Jarrold Hahn	0.3462	6ppc	Bartlein	Bru/Mcm	Bruno	BAT	Bruno	29.4 133	PRP 67.3	On
10	Gary Ocock	0.3481	6ppc	Krieger	Scarborough	Ocock	BAT DS	Ocock	133	Ocock	On

## Heavy Varmint

Place		Aggregate	Cal	BARREL	STOCK	STOCKER	ACTION	GUNSMITH	POWDER	BULLET-Wt	Seat depth
1	Lester Bruno	0.2256	6ppc	Krieger	Scarborough	Lester	Mavrik	Lester	29.2 8208	Bruno 68	On
2	Duke Rovarino	0.2524	6ppc	Krieger	Scarborough	Ocock	BAT	Ocock	28.5 133	Miller 65	On
3	Jim Wheeler	0.2611	6ppc	Bartlein	Bru/Mcm	Bruno	BAT	Ocock		Miller 65	On
4	Lou Murdica	0.2863	6ppc	Bartlein	Kelby	Kelbly	Grixley	Sosenko	29.6 133	Murdica	On
5	Dan Sutton	0.3048	6 BR	Bartlein	McMillan	Sutton	BAT	Sutton	29.5 8208	Berger 65	On
6	Hector Elias jr.	0.3298	6ppc	Krieger	McMillan	Sutton	Panda	Brackney	30 BLc-2	Miller 65	Off
7	Jarrold Hahn	0.3329	6ppc	Bartlein	Bru/Mcm	Ocock	BAT	Bruno	29.4 133	PRP 67.3	On
8	Chuck Miller	0.3491	6ppc	Krieger	Marsh/mcm	Miller	BAT	Miller	133	Miller 65	On
9	Ross McCollum	0.3563	6ppc	Krieger	Bru/Mcm	Bruno	BAT	Ocock	28.5 133	Miller 65	On
10	Cameron Snow	0.3643	6ppc	Krieger	McMillan	Snow	BAT	Socenko	133	Miller 65	On

Gary Ocock  
Match Reporter