

Cheyenne resident Bridger Steege wins Junior National Championship at the 2024 CMP Bianchi Cup International Action Pistol Tournament 22-24 May 2024

Submitted by Andy Rayland, Otto Rd Range Action Pistol Match Director

17-year-old Cheyenne Resident Bridger Steege had a great week in Columbia, Missouri competing in the prestigious CMP Bianchi Cup Action Pistol Tournament for the first time. Most first-time competitors at this pressure packed tournament are just happy to be there, but Bridger went one step further by winning the Junior National Championship by ONE point over runner up Bradley Koenig (Son of 20-time Bianchi Cup Champion Doug Koenig).



Bridger Steege with CMP Bianchi Cup Junior Trophy

Since the first Bianchi Cup in 1979, “The Cup” attracts the top guns from the US and Overseas. This year, 150 competitors from the US Australia, New Zealand, Switzerland, Germany and Japan gathered at the Green Valley Rifle and Pistol Club to compete in the four classic Action Pistol events that have

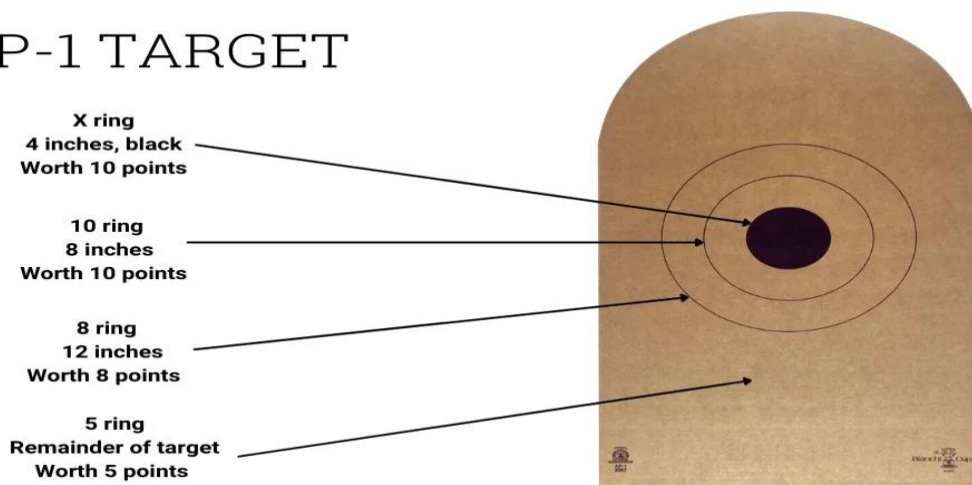
stood the test of time: The Barricade, The Practical, The Falling Plates and The Moving Target. 192 rounds were fired with a maximum possible score of 1920-192X.

The Bianchi Cup was created in 1979 by holster manufacturer, lawman, and retired Army National Guard Major General John Bianchi and the first World Champion of Combat Shooting in 1975 - Ray Chapman. The four-event course of fire was designed to demand skills required for Bullseye Pistol, Police Pistol Combat, and USPSA/IPSC without favoring or handicapping any one discipline. From 1984 to 2022 the NRA sanctioned the match. Beginning in 2023, the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) took over sanctioning the event.

New for 2024 was the addition of a Rimfire Division. This exciting new addition to the CMP Bianchi Cup program was a great way for shooters who are new to competitive pistol shooting (especially Junior shooters) can compete at the event with a rimfire pistol at a lower cost and enjoy the benefits of building confidence building scores.

All stages require drawing from a holster with a prescribed number of shots under established time limits. Target used is the AP-1 which is shaped like a tombstone - it has a four inch diameter X ring which scores 10 points and an "X" an eight inch diameter 10 ring, a 12 inch diameter 8 ring – any hits on target outside the 8 ring score 5 points. Other target used are the 8 inch diameter steel plates

AP-1 TARGET



Bridger competed in the top of the line “Open” Division which features custom “race” guns with an optical sight. Open Division firearms are capable of sub 2 inch groups at 50 yards and must be reliable since there are “alibis” are not permitted in Action Pistol. Bridgers’s gun was a Caspian Custom 1911 pistol in .38 Super caliber built by Sandy Garrett at Northern VA Gunworks. It was donated to Bridger by three time Bianchi Cup Grand Senior Champion John Sanders of Falls Church, VA. He used a holster from Double Alpha Academy and his load was a 115 grain Zero jacketed hollow point in front of 6.5 grains of VihtaVouri 3N37 powder and a Federal SP primer.



Championship Firearm: Caspian Custom 1911, .38 Super

Bridger's first event on Wednesday was the Practical where two targets are engaged under time pressure at distances ranging from 10 to 50 yards. 48 Shots are fired with a perfect score being 480-48X. Bridger got off to a great start scoring a 470-30X dropping points when one stage required engaging the two targets with the weak hand only.

Next event was the Falling Plates. A spectator favorite, this event requires the competitor to engage a bank of six 8-inch diameter steel plates from 10, 15, 20 and 25 yards under variable time limits, one shot per plate and no make-up shots. This is pressure packed because if a plate is missed it's ten points down. 48 shots fired and maximum possible score of 480-48X. Bridger scored a 470-47X missing only one plate at 15 yards.



Bridger shooting Falling Plates Event at 25 yard line.

On Thursday, Bridger moved on to the Moving Target Event. Another high pressure event (at this level they are all high pressure) requiring the competitor to shoot at a target that moves at 10 feet per second for 60 feet (Six seconds exposure time) from 10, 15, 20 and 25 yards. 48 shots fired maximum possible score of 480-48X. Bridger continued his fine performance scoring only 6 points down with an outstanding 474-26X.



Bridger at the Moving Target Event shooting the mover at the 20 yard stage

The final event for Bridger was the Barricade. The Barricade event consists of firing around the strong and weak side of a barricade at targets positioned at 10, 15, 25 and 35 yards under time pressure with variable time limits. At this point Bridger had a one-point lead over Bradley Koenig who already fired a clean score 480-35X. So, if Bridger cleans the Barricade with 480 points he wins the Junior National Championship – but if only one-shot lands outside the 10 ring into the 8 ring he will finish second place. Well, Bridger continued to respond splendidly to the pressure, and he cleaned the Barricade with a 480-41X and won the Junior National Championship with a final score of 1884-144X! Bradley Koenig was runner up with 1883-126X.



Figure 1 Bridger shooting the Barricade Event

Bridger has been shooting Action Pistol at Otto Rd Range since he was 9 years old. He competes in monthly matches of Defensive Pistol, Action Pistol, Steel Challenge and the annual NRA Action Pistol “Steamboat Challenge” Regional and Wyoming State Championships conducted each August at Otto Rd Range. His Father, Marshall and Mother Michelle have been instrumental in supporting and guiding him at every opportunity and getting him to the range for practice and shooting events. Parental support is of paramount importance for junior shooters. Congratulations Bridger on a great shooting sports achievement at the highest level we are all very proud.



From L to R : Bridgers father Marshall, Coach and Advisor Andy Rayland, Bridger, Cheyenne resident and competitor Robert Gaskins



Bridger (age 10) in 2017 with then Cheyenne Mayor Marian Orr at the 2017 Steamboat Challenge NRA Regional and State Championships



Junior competitors at the 2024 CMP Bianchi Cup: From L to R: Bridger Steege, Pierce Sutton, Malcolm Itzstein, Bradley Koenig, Layla Ziegler