

Mello Captures MA State HOA – Again

By Dr. Floyd R. Kittleson

Ludlow, MA - The Ludlow Fish & Game Club welcomed more than 50 shooters at the Massachusetts Skeet Championships August 24th-26th. It appeared to be start of a great weekend as Glenn Carboneau and his skeet committee worked the registration desk with a long line of anxious shooters. Lou Campedelli decorated his RV's lawn with his trademark pink flamingoes while Bruce and Nancy Allen's two dogs barked at the strange pink birds. Tom O'Donnell, meanwhile, was wiping down his Remington 1100 outside of his camper in anticipation of the day's afternoon's Doubles event.

It had been eight years since John Wieland won his last state championship (1999 20 Ga. Ch.) and his luck on this day was about to change for the better. A couple of gun malfunctions with his O/U on the 1st round forced John to borrow a gun that he had never even shouldered before to complete the round and the event. Once the all the scores were posted, John was declared champion with the lone 100!

“The Perazzi moved so well it never occurred to me that it was a borrowed gun,” claimed Wieland. “I'd pay anything for that gun!”

Mike Lombardy seized RU and class winners include last year's champion Tony Viscariello, Steve Baglione (2007 Zone 1 RU), Don Cossette, Charles Grabski, Ron Chmielewski, and Maureen Siemen.

Wieland and his borrowed success were not quite done for the weekend as John followed up his Friday victory by joining three other Saturday 12 gauge shooters at the championship shoot-off field with perfect 100's. Included were Mike Lombardy, Tony Viscariello and Dick Kmiec. John hung on tough and took RU. Imagine – two great victories with a borrowed gun, with one more to come. By the way, the very same Perazzi is for sale with an ask price of \$50,000 and rumor is John's thinking about it. Class winners include Viscariello, Kmiec, Glenn Carboneau (not with a borrowed gun), Alton Wilson, Don Clayton, Bill Tumbarello and Maureen Siemen.

John 'Beaver' Mello won his 6th 20 gauge state championship Saturday afternoon while Russell Lebel took RU against Charlie Amos and Dick Kmiec who also posted 100's.

Steve Baglione, potential 2008 ASSA VP candidate, was watching the shoot-offs when he observed, “I'm looking forward to shooting-off with Beaver at next year's state shoot. He could use another RU bowl.”

Saturday evening featured a marvelous awards banquet generously sponsored by MSSA past president, Don Cossette. Thanks Don! The guest of honor was Arthur Zonghetti, a celebrated state shooter who was awarded the 2007 'MSSA Award' for his many years of dedicated service to the game. Special belated thanks to Bill Batty who pulled an 'all-nighter' putting the banquet program together. It was a nice evening with

class medals presented, a delicious meal, plenty of cool refreshments, and, if you were real lucky a slice of Maureen's strawberry cheesecake!

Sunday morning launched the 2nd leg to the HOA championships. This year HOA class buckles from Montana Silversmiths were the prize and everyone wanted one. Kmiec was 3-by after the 28 gauge, but others were close behind. Beaver was down only two, Goose Kanavos only three, and Campedelli only...8. Good luck, Lou.

Kmiec and Lombardy won 28 gauge Ch & RU respectively and Linda Clayton and Maureen Siemen won their classes. George Morse shot a brilliant 99 to win A1, while John Carnuccio won A2 with an equally impressive score. Kanavos and Aho won AAA and AA.

Goose Kanavos wanted to be well rested before the .410 event because he knew he needed a perfect score.

"I rested alone in Campedelli's trailer for an hour watching TV before the event," said Goose. "TV definitely relaxes me," he grinned.

And the strategy worked. Goose shot the 100 and joined Mello, Fiori, Sullivan and Shaughnessy in an elite club with two consecutive .410 state championships. (The Shaughnessy record is five consecutive .410 championships).

"The 'Goose' legend continues to grow," sighed John Carnuccio. But can Goose join just Shaughnessy and make it three in a row? "I don't know," said John Dyson. "It's doubtful," said Campedelli. "No way guys! Of course he will!," screamed Maureen. "The Goose is the Goose - he's unflappable." Fingers crossed.

Goose claimed the .410 championship with the lone 100 with Angelo Troisi RU. This effort tied him for the HOA championships with Mello and Kmiec. Each shooter was guaranteed a buckle, but which one would receive the most highly coveted buckle of them all? The HOA Championship buckle - the crown jewel of the MSSA.

The shoot-offs were furious. Up and down the stations they went until Kmiec fell first claiming HOA AAA1. It was now a battle of bird vs. beast. Goose vs. Beaver. Both shooters previous HOA state champions; now competing for the biggest buckle east of the Missouri river. Up and down the line they went, visible only by the trails of dust and smoke left in their wakes. In the end, just like the Highlander, there can be only one. And Beaver alone was left with sword in hand; the Goose beheaded. This was Beaver's 8th HOA state championship! HOA class and buckle winners include Mello CH, Kanavos RU, Kmiec AAA, Lebel AA, John 'I want a Perazzi' Wieland A, Gerry Curley B, Alton Wilson C, Maureen Siemen D.

The MSSA would like to thank the Ludlow Fish & Game Club for hosting the 2007 State Championships. Marshall Steinbeck for wonderful targets, Glenn Carboneau and the Ludlow Skeet Committee, Bill Batty for the banquet program, Art Zonghetti for compiling the MSSA State Team data, Dick Haskins and all the referees and Don Cossette our dinner sponsor.

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