



CMP Smallbore with Brad Donoho Season 1, Episode 1

Ashley 0:05

Hey everybody, this is Ashley with the Civilian Marksmanship Program here with our very first podcast. Whoohoo! Please bear with us and be kind as we figure this thing out. But we're going to use this as a way of bringing you the latest on what we have going on with our programs, along with plenty of other worthwhile content that we'll pick up as we go.

For those who might not be aware, the Civilian Marksmanship Program, or the CMP for short, is a federally chartered 501(c)(3) nonprofit national organization dedicated to training and educating U.S. citizens in responsible uses of firearms through safety and marksmanship, training and also competitions. Though the CMP, as it exists today, was established in 1996, the history of the program actually dates back to President Theodore Roosevelt in 1903.

The CMP sets its highest priority on youth activities that build personal growth and life skills. All year long, the CMP offers competitions and learning courses around the country for rifle, and pistol, and air gun for all experience levels. Our largest event of the year is the National Rifle and Pistol Matches held at Camp Perry in Ohio, where our headquarters is located. The National Matches have been held at Camp Perry since 1907, and attract thousands of competitors each year.

Our office in Anniston, Alabama, holds one of our two, 80-point air gun ranges that hosts weekly and monthly events. The other 80-point range is located at our Camp Perry location. And both of those ranges are full of our electronic targets. So kind of cool. Alabama is also home to CMP's Talladega Marksmanship Park, which is open to the public daily and holds 500 acres -- that's right, 500 acres -- of outdoor pistol, rifle and shotgun opportunities, as well as a line of our outdoor electronic targets that you've, I mean, you just got to do these things. They're so cool.

Talladega is home to one of our three CMP stores where you can find rifles, competition accessories, and lots of other things that pretty sure any marksmanship enthusiasts would be excited to soar through. The other two stores are located in Anniston and also at Camp Perry.

We have so much going on, I could sit here forever and explain everything we have. So if you want to learn for yourself, or see for yourself, what we have, go ahead and take a visit to our website at www.thecmp.org to learn about all of the many, many programs we have to offer right now.

For those who don't know me, I'm the writer for the CMP, so you may have seen my byline on a good amount of our stories for the last, gosh, almost eight years now. And some of you may know me from walking the firing lines with a camera in my hand at many of our indoor and outdoor events around the country. It's been a wild ride. And I've been grateful for every minute of it, and also thankful for every incredible person I've been able to meet. And my hope with this podcast is that it will give all of you, as listeners, a little more of a personal relationship with us.

So, in this first podcast, I talked to Brad Donoho, who is now our smallbore program manager. I had this conversation with Brad back in 2020. Everyone remembers that year, right?

Despite this odd year where we haven't been able to have many competitions as we would have liked, we've been very busy within our offices coming up with new ways of bringing our programs to you. And our growing smallbore program is certainly a part of that. Some of you in our air rifle world may know Brad as the guy on the microphone. And in the last few years, he's also called some of our highpower matches at our Travel Games events and even at the National Matches. So I'm sure you'll recognize his voice once you hear it.

Even though you may have heard him or even seen him at our events around the country, Brad is actually based out of our North office at Camp Perry in Ohio. And he knows what he's talking about when it comes to smallbore. As a former collegiate athlete from the University of Kentucky, and even going way back, I won't say how far back Brad, he was a CMP Summer Camp counselor while he was in college. So he's been CMP for a long time. In this podcast, he tells us a little more about the influences that went into CMP's revitalization of smallbore at the National Matches. And he also talks about the new opportunities available for our small bore competitors, including a distinguished badge program and even match sanctioning, which is just new 2020.

Oh, one more thing. We should mention that the smaller program has recently added a postal event for 2021, which runs from January to April, where individuals fire upon special targets issued by the CMP. And then those targets are submitted back to the CMP staff for scoring. That smallbore postal event includes three position and prone matches from 50 feet. And it's just a fun way for adults and juniors to compete against others from around the nation, but from the comfort of their own home ranges.

If you want to learn more, or if you want to register, registration is open until March 23rd, 2021. You can find that on our website under the complete drop down on the homepage, and then look for the CMP smallbore postal program link.

I apologize ahead of time for a few tiny blips of, of bad audio connection in this podcast. But I assure you, this is all good info ahead. So stick with us. I may also need apologize too for my Northwest Ohio accent but, I mean, I just can't help it. So I'm sorry. So without any further ado, here we go. Here's my conversation with Brad and a look into our CMP snowboard program.

Brad Donoho 6:19

Hey, how's it going?

Ashley 6:20

Alright, how are you?

Brad Donoho 6:22

Doing well, sitting here in the office getting a little bit of work done.

Ashley 6:26

Awesome. How's the weather up in Northwest Ohio?

Brad Donoho 6:31

Well, we had that week of really warm weather, but it's starting to feel seasonal again. So we're getting a little chilly up here.

Ashley 6:38

And the wind off the lake bothering it all yet?

Brad Donoho 6:42

No, not yet. But give it a few weeks.

Ashley 6:45

Alright. So Brad, tell us a little bit about what you do at CMP.

Brad Donoho 6:52

Yeah, sure. It's kind of evolved a little bit over time. But my current position at CMP. I'm the smallbore manager. And, but, I also have a few other responsibilities. But as a smallbore manager, my job now is to operate a bunch of or create a bunch of small bore matches and see about revitalizing a once popular sport.

Ashley 7:15

And you used to shoot smallbore yourself, is that right?

Brad Donoho 7:19

Yeah, I've got a little bit of history in the sport. I used to shoot smallbore when I was a, when I was a kid. That's how I got my start in shooting. And then I eventually went on to compete for a JROTC in Louisville, Kentucky. And after that I was recruited by, er, I attended the University of

Kentucky, where I was, I competed there for 4 years. And we shot both air rifle and smallbore. And it was after that that I was hired on by CMP. So I've been, I've been a CMP since 2007.

Ashley 8:01

Wow, that's a long time!

Brad Donoho 8:04

It's been a long time. Goes by quick.

Ashley 8:08

Oh, yeah, definitely. So tell me a little bit about this, the smallbore program? How did it begin at CMP? Where did this idea come from that we needed to build our own smallbore program?

Brad Donoho 8:19

The idea of smallbore at Camp Perry, or just smallbore in general, definitely isn't new. The reason CMP is now running a smallbore program is because of the National Smallbore Matches here at Camp Perry leaving in 2014. And with that move, we saw a pretty drastic reduction in the number of smallbore competitors across the country. So, a lot of the competitors reached out to the CMP and asked us to, if we would consider running our own smallbore National Matches. And, took a few years, but in 2018, the CMP tasked us, or tasked me, with conducting a smallbore National Championship, here at Camp Perry once again. And, pretty tall task. That's the origin of the program. And ever since then, you know, 2018 was our first year. We ran another National Matches Championship, National Match Smallbore Championship in 2019. We had big plans for 2020, and of course we all know the pandemic shut everything down. So that kind of put a damper on things, but, I don't know. Time will tell. We'll see how it grows once we get things back to normal after the pandemic kind of dies down.

Ashley 9:35

So obviously a lot of work went into creating these new series of matches. Talk a little bit about the outside entities and individuals you use to influence the development of these programs and matches?

Brad Donoho 9:51

Sure, yeah. Well, although I do, I do have a little bit of knowledge about Camp Perry, I only shot at it a handful of times. So I kind of leaned heavily on the experience of some of the experts out there, the ones that have been coming here since they were kids. Guys like Mike Carter, and Erin Gestl, and also a phenomenal shooter, herself, Rea Kempley, and many others, members of the Army Marksmanship Unit -- Hank Gray, George Norton, those guys helped me out. But really what I wanted to do was reach out to them and ask them what was important for us to run a smallbore championship, a successful smallbore championship. They provided the guidance. And with the help of many of the people here at CMP, we were able to pull off what was considered a pretty successful championship.

Ashley 10:41

So as a smallbore competitor, Brad, what are sort of some of the things that you feel are important to you to put in the program that you know will also be important to other competitors who are looking to do some CMP smallbore matches?

Brad Donoho 10:55

Sure. So here at Camp Perry, it's important to understand that we've got two different groups of shooters. And what I mean by that is we've got the adults that have been coming here since they were children. And then we've also got the large population of junior shooters. So when we're creating smallbore matches, we've got to think of both, both of those groups of people. So as an adult, coming to Camp Perry is one of the greatest accomplishments a shooter can have. So, Camp Perry has got a lot of history and traditions, so it's important for me, as a manager, to recognize that history and to create something that those competitors are going to recognize and appreciate.

But at the same time, I've got a population of junior shooters. And these junior shooters are growing up in an era where technology is advancing faster than you can blink your eyes. So we've got to find a way to appease those junior shooters who are used to high-tech methods of scoring and newer concepts that you might find in the Olympic Games that is not typically traditional to Camp Perry or any of the National Matches of the past. So balancing those two things are the most important for me. But I would say tradition is a big one.

Ashley 12:22

Yeah, definitely. So what sort of successes have you seen with the program? I know you talked about it a little bit, but of these things that you're trying to implement into the program, do you feel like they've come across fairly well, so far?

Brad Donoho 12:40

Sure. Our first year at the National Matches, you know, we had 70, 70 or so three-position shooters, and roughly about the same in prone, and we knew it was going to be a slow build. But, for our first matches, we thought it couldn't have gone any better. And we saw the match grow the following year, which is always a good indication that you're doing things the right way. And 2020 was already setting up to be a banner year for us, because an important thing we need to think about is, to get juniors into our competitions, they need to have as many shooting opportunities as possible. So what we did was, our three-position air rifle championship, we've scheduled it directly, before immediately before, the smallbore championship, so they can go from one match to the next without having to make multiple trips. And parents don't have to take as much vacation. So, I think in terms of scheduling, that was a huge success. And we received a lot of positive feedback because of it. Unfortunately, the situation with COVID shut all that down. But scheduling has been great.

The matches that we're running, we're running some traditional matches that everyone's used to, so the adults are very happy with our schedule and match format. But then we're also adding things that the juniors are used to like, finals. You know, finals have never been shot

here at Camp Perry, but juniors are used to finals. So they want to they want to shoot those. It's more opportunities for them to compete and give college coaches a chance to look at them. So I think we've done a fairly decent job of balancing tradition with modern smallbore shooters.

Ashley 14:30

Yeah. And some people might not be aware of this, but you're also trying to bring in, some of the new things you're trying to bring in are the way that you even score smallbore. You're trying to enhance that. Maybe talk a little bit about the, the app that you all use for scoring.

Brad Donoho 14:46

Yeah, absolutely. Well, first, the biggest hurdle for running matches at Camp Perry is scoring. When you have the potential for hundreds of competitors shooting on paper targets, you pretty much have to have an army to score all of those targets and get results out quickly. And that's just something that we weren't exactly set up to do. So we reached out to Shooter's Technology, the creators of the Orion Scoring System, and were in discussion with them. And thankfully, they were able to create a scoring app that was able to score all of our targets. And that was very revolutionary for the outdoor smallbore game. And if you'd like I can tell you a little bit about how it's done.

Ashley 15:46

Yeah!

Brad Donoho 15:47

So the targets, they each have a shape on them so that a camera phone can recognize the target and adjust for any sort of calibration issues that you might have from taking a picture, standing six feet away. So the way it works is our range officers, they each have an iPod, we have a wireless network on the range, after the competitors shoot the targets, we send our range officers downrange first. Each range officer can handle about 10 firing points. And they will go down with a pre-loaded roster and a scoring app. And all they do is take one picture at a time. They take a single picture, move to the next target, take another picture. And each target has a QR code that the app or the software recognizes. And it knows which shooter it belongs to. So the range officer takes the picture, and it immediately sends that target wirelessly to our stat office. So we have about four to six scorekeepers at any given time. And as soon as the pictures are taken by the range officers, they immediately start scoring them.

And in theory, and we've seen it happen before the competitors return from downrange in retrieving their targets, their scores are already posted online. And that's just something the national matches or any form of shooting, besides, short of electronic targets, has ever seen. You just you don't get results that quickly. It just completely changed the way we scored. And the, the added benefit that you get from scoring that way is it's all very consistent. There's no opinions on whether or not it's in or out. It's, it's computerized. So you've got a paper target, you've got an electronic score, and the scores are online immediately. And they can, the competitors, can look on their phone and decide whether or not they believe it was scored correctly.

And one of the hurdles that the National Matches had before was, if you disagreed with the score, you would have to wait in line and go challenge it with the with the scorekeepers. And, and they would determine whether or not it was scored correctly. And it was it was all a matter of opinion. Now, something that we're very proud of doing is we want everything to be as transparent as possible. And we want the shooter to walk away extremely confident that their shot was scored correctly. So we're, we're encouraging shooters to come in and question everything. If they have something that they believe was scored incorrectly, I tell them, you know what, go grab your target, I'll bring you into the computer. I want you to look at it, and I will give you a magnifying glass for your own target, and you make the call. You tell me if you think that our computer system scored it correctly. And I will tell you 99% of the time, they look and they make their own decision for themselves. And they walk away, when you had when you have that level of transparency, you have nothing but satisfied competitors. And that's what we've seen in the two years that we've run it.

Ashley 19:12

Wow, that's amazing.

Brad Donoho 19:14

Yeah, we're very satisfied with it, so, and excited with the future of the app too. There's a lot of opportunities that they have, and we have, that we can capitalize on to make it even more of a more user-friendly experience for the shooter.

Ashley 19:30

Yeah. What's great about that is competitors can stay even more focused on the firing line -- just do their thing, get the match completed more quickly, so they can go home confident that their posted scores are as accurate as possible, thanks to the software.

Brad Donoho 19:47

Absolutely.

Ashley 19:48

Another great thing that you've brought to the National Matches that I don't think you've really gotten to try out yet because of everything that's happened in 2020 is you've helped together a smallbore SAFS -- a small arms firing school -- that individuals can attend to learn more about the sport.

Brad Donoho 20:07

Yeah, well, we were able to do one SAFS program in 2019. It was, it was a pilot program. When we have, when we conduct the National Pistol and Rifle Championships, the Army Marksmanship Unit, they operate the Small Arms Firing School. And that is for competitors to come in and, er, aspiring competitors, prospective competitors to come in and try out a sport that they may or may not have ever been exposed to. So we were, we were trying to think of ways to do something similar for smallbore. And when we introduced the, or, we moved to the

Three-Position National Championships, the air rifle championships, we figured there might be some air rifle shooters who have never had a chance to shoot smallbore before. So we reached out to the Army Marksmanship Unit, they agreed that the shooters that had air rifle experience that may want to shoot smallbore, this would be a prime opportunity for them to come in and learn a little bit from some of the best shooters in the world. And in 2019, we did that. We had, it was small class, less than 20 competitors, but in the end, it was a successful event. And we were looking to grow, grow that program a little bit in 2020. But obviously, that got shut down. But we're, we're pretty excited with the future of that program. As AMU has once again committed to running that program for us.

Ashley 21:41

Yeah, I'm sure that's, that's gonna be a great opportunity that competitors will take advantage of once they have that opportunity. Again, whenever that happens.

Brad Donoho 21:49

We've got, we've got to somehow inject some, some life into this sport, because when the National Matches moved in 2014, we look at that as an entire generation of people that would have come here during their high school years that never knew Camp Perry existed. So we've missed out on a large population of shooters that might have returned. Part of, part of doing this smallbore SAFS program is to inject new life into the sport. And it's a tall task but we're, we're trying to get it done.

Ashley 22:29

Sounds like you're taking the steps that you need to, to work towards that.

Brad Donoho 22:32

Trying to.

Ashley 22:33

Along with that, we also have a new Distinguished Badge Program for smallbore to recognize those who have done well in the sport and are going for that kind of goal.

Brad Donoho 22:45

Sure. Yeah. Part of the, part of the growth process for any sport is, or any of our shooting sports, is, is the Distinguished Badge Program. Pistol has it, we have a rimfire pistol badge now, three-position air rifle Distinguished Badges, Rifle Badges. And it only seemed -- it was obvious that we needed to do something similar for smallbore. Distinguish Badges are not new for the sport, but CMP, at CMP, we thought it was important to do something as well. So yeah, in 2020, we implemented that program. We've had very few matches as a result of the, the pandemic, but that's an opportunity for match directors to sanction their matches through CMP and to get their competitors to start earning excellence and competition points.

Ashley 23:36

So what you're referring to are the sanctioned matches that CMP implemented this year. Haven't had many chances to do that, I don't think, but, now clubs can host their own sanctioned smallbore matches.

Brad Donoho 23:50

Yeah, absolutely.

Ashley 23:52

For competitors to earn their Excellence-In-Competition, EIC, points towards their own Smallbore Distinguished Badge.

Brad Donoho 24:01

Yeah, so we've got an online sanctioning program, now, it's up and running, that, and we're encouraging anyone and everyone to register their matches with, with CMP -- those matches that can be sanctioned through us. The three-position smallbore champion smallbore matches, you can shoot a 3 by 40, 3 by 20. You can shoot that at 50 meters, 50 yards, or 50 feet. So indoor matches can be sanctioned as well. We also have prone matches that you can sanction. You can sanction a 1600. You can do a two day, four day, whatever, whatever the match director would like to do. And on top of those sanction events that you can schedule. We also offer smallbore achievement medals and pins. So if you're going, if you're looking for awards to give out at your championship or your match, you can order medals from us that say CMP smallbore matches. And we're happy to send those out to you.

Ashley 25:01

So what sort of things do you have working for the smallbore program for the future? I know you've done so much already. And it's all heading in the right direction. So what, what are the things are you looking to add?

Brad Donoho 25:14

Right now, with the pandemic, it's got everybody thinking outside the box. And we're trying to - how do you -- how do you run competitions for people when they can't gather at a specific site. So to do that, you know, postals are not new to the sport, but we're going to be introducing a postal program starting in January. And that postal program will be a 50-foot, 3 by 20 competition, where clubs or individuals can register for the postal. It'll be a small fee, and the CMP will print personalized targets for each competitor, they will shoot those targets once they receive them from the mail, and they can either send those back to us by mail, or if they have the Orion Scoring System, they can score them themselves and submit them electronically.

So that's typically how our postal is run. It's, it's not a new idea to CMP, but adding smallbore to it is. So that's, that's something we've got, we've got going on. We're excited that with the possibility of partnering with Eley to run some smallbore matches, remote, smallbore matches,

we're running a Winter Home Range Appreciation Series -- that was, that decision was just made recently. And very similar to the one we ran in the summer, we're allowing matches to be sanctioned at 50 foot. And once again, we're hoping to have some, some sponsors for it so we can give out some good prizes to the winners and also raffle some things off as well.

So those are those are two of the things we have coming. You know, once, once things get back to normal, we've got some bigger plans. We want to go, we want to take our matches on the road. And we've, we're in discussion with the Hollywood Rifle and Pistol club there in Hollywood, Florida. And we're looking to run a regional championship there. I'd like to run something out west. So, if you're listening and, and you've got a good venue for a smallbore match, contact us. We're interested. So, we want to, we want to go on the road and run some - take the matches to the smallbore community.

Ashley 26:58

Wow. Well, I mean, it goes without saying that this has been a crazy year that no one expected.

Brad Donoho 27:45

We're all making this up as we go.

Ashley 27:48

Oh yeah.

Brad Donoho 27:45

It's kind of, it's difficult to run a sport, when, when nobody can get together and compete. But, you know, we're trying to think outside the box. So -- and also, we're, hey, we're looking for suggestions. If, if you've got ideas that, you know, we can, we can do -- reach out to us.

Ashley 28:06

Alright, and if anyone wants to reach out to you, Brad, what, what's your contact information?

Brad Donoho 28:10

Sure, they can email me at smallbore@thecmp.org or call my office at 419-635-2141. My extension is 730.

Ashley 28:24

Alright. Well, is there anything else you want everyone to know about your smallbore program?

Brad Donoho 28:29

No, thanks for having me. It was good.

Ashley 28:31

Yeah. I really appreciate your talking with us. And, I mean, be sure to let us know if anything else new comes up.

Brad Donoho 28:38

Sounds good.

Ashley 28:39

Alright, thanks, Brad.

Brad Donoho 28:39

Thank you, Ashley.

Ashley 28:31

Well, there it is. Now you have a little more info, a little more in-depth look into our smallbore program. I think Brad is full of a lot of good information, and I'm sure he means it when he says he's open to suggestions. So, please, don't be shy. Give him a shout if you have any ideas. He's a, he's a really good guy. So, no one should be afraid of him. I'm sure he'll, he'll take your suggestions to heart. So, so please do that. And I just want to thank Brad again for allowing us to talk with him, and I want to thank you for taking a listen. We'll be back again with more soon, but, in the meantime, you can learn more about the CMP smallbore program and everything else we have going on by visiting our social media pages -- we have a Facebook and Instagram page that we update daily throughout the week -- so check those out. You can also take a look at our website at www.thecmp.org.

Alright everyone, well, be good, stay safe, and we'll hopefully see you again soon.

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