



## CMP Talladega Marksmanship Park with Greg Raines Season 1, Episode 2

### Ashley 0:05

Hello again, everyone. This is Ashley back for round two of our CMP podcast series. Oh man, we are so humbled by the amount of support we got from that first podcast we put out a few weeks ago on our smallbore rifle program. Truly incredible. So thank you for taking an interest in this, we really appreciate it.

And if you didn't see this already, I just wanted to let you know that not only can you find our podcasts through our website, and our Buzzsprout podcast site, CMP podcast can now be found on Apple Podcasts and Spotify, Google Podcasts and a few others. So hopefully we'll have a few more of those mediums available in the, in the coming weeks. So stay tuned for that.

Okay, so let's get right to it. Okay. In this podcast, we talk to our own Greg Raines, who is the business development manager at our marksmanship park in Alabama. And he's going to give us the lowdown on all of the available opportunities at CMP's Talladega Marksmanship Park.

Yes, for those who may not know, the Civilian Marksmanship Program has its own marksmanship park in Alabama. And wow, where do I even start talking about this place? For anyone who is into shooting sports at all, whether it be rifle or pistol or shotgun – there's something for you at Talladega Marksmanship Park. The Park itself sits on 500 acres that is loaded with... Can I say loaded with? Is that too much of a shooting pun? Anyway, Talladega is loaded with a variety of ranges, some of which feature a line of outdoor electronic targets. And these things are pretty sweet.

You can use them to shoot at varying distances without ever having to leave the firing line. And there's a monitor right next to you that will automatically show you your shot placement. Using these things, you, you barely have to move at all the entire time, you're on the firing line, which is pretty ideal for shooters, right? And it's so easy and convenient. And you can get so much more practice in with these things because you don't have to worry about the little things like getting your scope lined up or going down range to change targets or even moving target lines. So they're just they're super, super cool.

If you're in a shotgun, there's a beautiful sporting clays loop at the Park that you can use for a day of fun. Greg mentions this and I've thought the same before too, but it reminds me of a golf course. And you can even use a golf cart to navigate around the loop too. So it's, it's so neat. And one of the big things that is really just getting to stretch his legs is the Park's Unknown Distance Range. It's quickly become a very popular feature at the Park and allows you to practice shooting at varying distances. And there are even targets in the shape of animals for those of you looking to do a little hunting practice.

Anyway, I'm personally a big fan of the beauty of the facility. You pull up, you walk through this huge entranceway to the Club House to check in at the front desk area – as soon as you walk in, you're automatically struck by this gorgeous fireplace. I know I've cozied up to it many times. And once you're checked in, you can walk out to that back patio that looks, overlooks the, the 600-yard range. And you're truly like, wow, this place is incredible. It's breathtaking.

#### **Ashley 3:26**

Basically what I'm getting at is it's just this fantastic space. Once you see the ranges and see how friendly and accommodating the staff members are. You're gonna want to get out on the range yourself, and you're certainly welcome to do that. They'll take good care of you there.

#### **Ashley 3:41**

The Club House is spacious and offers plenty of seating with television sets placed throughout it. Seriously, guys, those views of the mountains. I'm not even kidding. Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful all year long.

#### **Ashley 3:55**

There are so many other things that Talladega Marksmanship Park offers outside of shooting...um, sponsorship opportunities for businesses, a fully-stocked Pro Shop where you can purchase an M1 and several other items. And a big thing that is the mission statement of the Civilian Marksmanship Program that Greg is really doing a fantastic job in getting started down at Talladega is getting youth programs like Boys and Girls Clubs, 4-H, Scouts, local high schools – really giving them a place to get out and tour and maybe even pick up a new hobby.

#### **Ashley 4:30**

So I've talked enough, I'm gonna let Greg take it from here and tell you all the reasons why Talladega is known as “The Home of Marksmanship.” Here's my conversation with Greg Raines of Talladega Marksmanship Park.

#### **Ashley 4:48**

Hey, Greg.

#### **Greg 4:50**

Hey!

**Ashley. 4:51**

Hey, how are things in Alabama?

**Greg 4:53**

They're good. It's very cold today. It's in the 30's and the Windchill is, uh, feels like 20, 25...

**Ashley. 5:01**

Oh, no...

**Greg 5:02**

A little chilly.

**Ashley 5:03**

I mean, it's winter, but we'll try to forget about the cold and talk about all the fun stuff we have going on at Talladega. Are you ready?

**Greg 5:13**

I'm ready!

**Ashley 5:13**

All right, so can you tell us a little bit about your, your job duties or what do you do at the CMP?

**Greg 5:21**

Yeah, uh, at the Civilian Marksmanship Program, at the Talladega Marksmanship Park, I'm the business development manager. I'm responsible for all the sponsorships at the Park, all the media relations, the corporate shooting events, the corporate meetings, uh, tours at the Park, you know. Also, one of the things that we're trying to start doing this year is establishing new youth programs bringing more youth groups to the Park and whether it be a beginner basic rifle, pistol or shotgun class, or just holding field trips at the Park. So I'm really starting to try to establish more and more events out of the Park.

**Ashley 6:00**

That's excellent. So the Park itself, there's so much to talk about, so much going on there. Can you explain some of the features of the Park? What types of ranges are there and things like that?

**Greg 6:11**

Sure. Uh, the Talladega Marksmanship Park is a \$28-million facility. We're located on 500 acres about five miles behind the Talladega Super Motor Speedway. We have shotgun areas, we have rifle areas, and we have pistol areas. They're kind of divided up. Our shotgun area, uh – the feat – the main feature of that is we have a one-and-a-half-mile paved loop, uh, sporting clay loop, with 100 targets. We also have skeet field, we have trap field, we have a 5-Stand... So we offer everything for the shotgun shooter. I do corporate events over there, and we do hold state, regional and national tournament championships on the shotgun side.

**Greg 7:00**

Now it moves into our rifle range where we have a 100-yard qualifying rifle range, and then we move to our main range – the John C. Garand range, which is 2-, 3- and 600 yards. Those two ranges are electronic targeting. Uh, the rifle range that we just opened this past summer is our Unknown Distance Range. It is a low-tech steel target range with targets ranging from 100 yards out to 620 yards. We have around 120 stationary steel targets that are in the ground. And then we have around 12 life-size animals throughout this range that can be moved around.

**Greg 7:40**

Then we also have our pistol ranges. We have an electronic pistol range, and then we have one of our most popular ranges, which is a steel reactionary pistol range, where they're firing at 25 yards. And then we also have our Action Bay pistol ranges where we've held competitions, and we also have a lot of our local law enforcement come and do their recertifications there. But on those ranges that we have the electronic targets, it is the KTS system, and I'll get into that in more detail in – further in the interview.

**Ashley 8:10**

And, um, the Club House – it's this grand view as you pull into the parking lot. It's this beautiful lodge-type building. Um, what are some of the things that are inside the Club House itself?

**Greg 8:25**

You know, the Club House – when somebody first pulls into the Park, you know, they see that, and they see that this is something different. It's not your shooting range that is out in the woods, it's on a dirt track. You know, they see that Club House, and that really sets the stage before the shooter actually even gets on the range or in the Club House because the view is phenomenal. You know, the two columns are based after Camp Perry up there to emulate that, to really pay homage to Camp Perry. And when they pull in there, they see that. You can't see any of the ranges or anything. You see the Club House.

You walk in and it's a 13,000-foot, square-foot, Club House with meeting rooms, Pro Shop, just about everything you can need in there. You know, I've hosted meetings in there with different companies from Alabama Power to Georgia Pacific to Home Depot to, you know, other smaller organizations that come in there hold their meetings. And we have, you know, all the TVs, we have the Pro Shop. And then in our Pro Shop we do sale the highly-prized M1 Garand there. We have people come from all over just to buy that gun, and we do sell ammo. So it is a fully-functional Club House to where we can do just about anything. You know, we've got – this summer, we're going to have two weddings in the in the Club House up there and on our back patio that overlooks our main range. So it is something to see and it's really something that really sets us apart when somebody first pulls in to CMP for the first time.

**Ashley 9:54**

Absolutely. I know any time I'm down there, one of the first things I want to do is walk out that Club House and go back to that wall of windows that overlooks the 600-range and just take in that view, oh my gosh... It's incredible.

**Greg 10:07**

Absolutely.

**Ashley 10:08**

I wish I would have gotten married down there. It's amazing.

**Greg 10:11**

Well it is! Not only do you get to see the beautiful range in the property in the Club House, but when you go out on that back deck, you really get to see the beauty of the southern Appalachian Mountains right there in northern Alabama.

**Ashley 10:27**

Yeah, so that range that's just below the Club House – you walk down the stairs, almost like a grand staircase, and you reach that 600-yard range that houses those electronic targets that you had mentioned before. Can you talk about those targets, how they work and the appeal of them?

**Greg 10:45**

With the KTS targeting system, the Kongsberg electronic Targeting System from Norway, what that is, is really something very unique that you just don't see anywhere in the United States. With the electronic targeting systems, you don't need to wait for feedback on your score, you don't need to have a spotter, you don't need to go down range and change the target. So it eliminates all that and really lets you shoot more...lets the shooter enjoy more. And you get an accurate depiction of where you're actually, your shot went. And you don't waste your time changing out those targets. Electronic scoring, you know, provides you to get faster results. So, and also what they've done is, with those electronic targets, if we're having a competition, you can get on your cell phone and log in. And you can actually see – you can follow who you want to follow there and see what they're actually shooting.

**Greg 11:40**

But the way that targeting system works that makes it very unique is the way it records the shot. So there's, as the bullet penetrates the target, there's an insulation and there's a rubber backing, and between that is an acoustic chamber. So when the projectile hits that target, it sends out sound waves that the microphones picked up and it also detects the heat in there. So when the bullet passes through the sound waves spread out like ripples on water, and then it hits these microphones – also records the heat – sends that back to the monitor that's right beside the shooter, and will show you exactly where the bullet passed through. Thus soon as you hear the report from your rifle, you can look over and it shows you exactly where you shot. So it just makes it more enjoyable for the shooter much more time efficient so they're not wasting time, you know, having a call the range cold, go down and see where the bullet passed through. They can look right over to the monitor, they can see it, the competitors can see it, your competition can see it. It just makes it more enjoyable for the shooters, whether they're

just out there by themselves shooting for recreation, or if we're in a natural competition, just like we had at the Talladega 600.

**Ashley 12:57**

What I think is interesting about this, too, is it's this sophisticated system. And it sounds like it could be intimidating to those who aren't, you know, electronically inclined, but it really is an easy user-friendly system to use. And there are plenty of people who are there on the range to help if anyone needs it.

**Greg 11:40**

Correct, it is very simple. When you, when the shooter comes up the line, the RO (range officer) will instruct them the basic safety measures of shooting on the line, then we'll go over a little bit of basic education on the target because there's a few buttons that you'd have to push on your screen there to get to which distance you're firing, whether it be 2-, 3- or 600. You'll get that set up. Basically it takes care of itself after that. I mean, you'll shoot, it shows you whether your shot passed, where it hit on the target. You hit the reset button, clears it and you start shooting again. So it's very easy. And if you do have a question, we have many ROs right there on the line that can come over and assist you. So it's very, very simple to learn and use.

**Ashley 14:00**

And that's for rifle, is that correct?

**Greg 14:03**

That's correct, it is for rifle. It's for, it's on our 100-yard range. And then it's on our main range that goes from targets from 2-, 3- and 600. And one of the things I need to clarify, before you're able to shoot on our main range at 2-, 3- and 600, you must qualify on our 100-yard range. And that'll be qualifying on those electronic targets shooting, grouping inside the black, and then you can move up to our main range.

**Ashley 14:29**

You've kind of already talked about this. You know, what truly makes the Talladega Marksmanship Park a park for all marksmen, "The Home of Marksmanship," right, is it really has something for everybody. You know, rifle, pistol, shotgun. What are some of the things that you find people gravitate toward the most, what are the most popular or more popular uses for the ranges at the Park?

**Greg 14:56**

Right. I think our pistol shooters, one of the things that they love, they come out to the low-tech end to be able to shoot on the steel reactionary targets because it is so nice, it's covered. We have a range officer right there. It's not like going out in the woods and shooting tin cans. We have the steel reactionary targets that they can shoot, they can move between different lanes. It's very nice. So they love that. They can drive their car down there, park. You know, there's brick and mortar restrooms. They need to take a break, they can do that. So pistol shooters really do love that aspect of the Park to where they can come, feel comfortable. They

can get the safety instructions they need. And if they do need a Basic Pistol Class, you know, we have a certified trainer there that is retired sheriff's deputy that can, you know, teach them how to use the pistol – how to use it safely. So, that really is what our pistol shooters, you know, what they like.

#### **Greg 15:55**

Our rifle shooters, on the other hand, love the fact that they can come out, zero in their scopes on the electronic targets, get their deer rifles ready because that's, you know, that's big here in Alabama – deer hunting. So, they can get their deer rifles zeroed in, they can move over to the 600. The rifle shooters really now are starting to gravitate toward the Unknown Distance because, like I said, it's unknown. Those life-size animal targets, you know, we can move those around. We have, you know, we have a deer out there, we have an elk, we've got a bear, coyote, you know, hogs out there. So it gives them something to shoot at to where it's not at 2-, 3- and 600. So it gives them a little more of a challenge. There's no electronics out there. But you can definitely hear the ping in the steel when their, when their lead hits it.

#### **Greg 16:43**

Shotgun area – little bit for everybody. From the beginner to the expert, they can go around the sporting clay loops, we've got the 5-Stand, we got the trap, we got the skeet fields. You know, you can get in a golf cart and shoot the sporting clay loop. It's going to take you about three hours, but you'll get, you know, 100 clay pigeons to shoot at. And it is a very, what I call, is like playing golf with shotguns. You get in a golf cart with your buddies, you go around, you keep score, and it's just something that is fun to do together. You know, I've had a lot of corporate events go out there and do the sporting clay loop because they can all get together, give away prizes, you know, make fun of each other a little bit if somebody misses a shot. So it is, it's just fun for people to go out there. Whether you're a beginner, expert, male, female – everybody's doing the sporting clay loop. So, we have something for everybody at CMP, at the Park out there, so it's just fun. And it's fun to get out there and just shoot in a safe way. And that's what we teach, is doing all this, and safety is our number one goal out there – is to teach everyone how to shoot safely.

#### **Ashley 17:46**

And who could come shoot at Talladega? Do you need a membership or anything? Or how, how are people getting in there?

#### **Greg 17:52**

No, it is all open to the public. And that's kind of another thing that sets us apart, you know. And no membership required. All you would need to do is come to the Park, watch our safety video – it's about a 12-minute video – watch the video, fill out our liability affidavit, and you're good to go. Once you get down to the ranges, then the range officers takeover if you have any questions or need any instructions.

**Ashley 18:16**

Alright, so let's talk a little bit about the events you have going on monthly at Talladega. There are highpower matches and the steel challenge events, Rimfire Sporter, 3-gun events, and also some educational classes for Basic Pistol, Rifle, Shotgun. Can you speak a little to any of that?

**Greg 18:34**

Hey, well, one of the new exciting things we have at CMP is our Basic Rifle, Pistol and Shotgun classes. And we've kind of changed it up now to where the shooter can call in and schedule their own time, which is convenient for them. And we've kind of done that because Brett Langford, our new training manager, he's also our new chief range safety officer, has kind of changed it up a little bit. It's still \$30 per class, you do need to bring your eye and ear protection. It's about an hour and a half, classroom, and then there's about an hour and a half on the range time. Just call the range. Go to extension 453, you'll get Brett, once he gets on there, he can schedule the class for you.

And you can schedule those classes Wednesday through Sunday. It's whatever is convenient for you. You can bring your pistol, Brett will work with you from the classroom of breaking down the pistol, showing you everything you need to know about it, then actually take you on the range, and you can qualify and pass his class. I know with all the new gun owners out there today, this is something that is really needed. And we're happy now here at CMP to be able to offer that class for our shooters.

**Ashley 19:38**

We have to talk about – I know it's 2021 now – but we're still living in this new world with all the remnants of 2020 spilling over a bit. I know that the CMP has put a lot of thought into how to keep staff and guests out of harm's way during the time of COVID. Can you talk a little bit about the precautions and efforts taking place at Talladega to ensure the safety of everyone while they visit?

**Greg 20:00**

Yeah, absolutely. You know, with 2020 that we just went through, we're still experiencing COVID-19 here in 2021. You know, we've gone the extra, we've taken those extra steps. You know, we do follow the CDC guidelines, we follow the state of Alabama guidelines, and then we followed our own Board of Director guidelines here at CMP. You know, we do require, ask that when shooters and customers do come into the Club House that they do wear a mask, we have masks out front, that if they don't have one, they can grab and put on. We have hand sanitizer located throughout the building. We do require that all employees in the Club House, you know, have the PPE (personal protective equipment) on such as the mask. Now, once we get our office, you know, where you're allowed to take that off. But in dealing with the public, we're doing the social distancing, we're masking up and we have the hand sanitizer in place. Now, when we get on the range, our Ros – we're still requiring them to wear the mask when dealing with the customers. And you know, just in general, as they're walking up and down the line on the range, we want them wearing their mask. Now, as the customers get out there to shoot, they can take their mask off to shoot. We're still requiring the social distancing inside



and out. So you know, we're, like I said, we're following all the CDC guidelines and the state of Alabama. So when that changes, we'll reevaluate, and then we'll change along with that to make sure everyone is safe. Not only the shooters, but the employees as well.

**Ashley 21:29**

Very important. In my opinion, it's super important. And I'm very thankful, and I'm sure many other people are thankful for all that extra effort you're putting into keeping everyone safe.

So what are some upcoming events that people should know about?

**Greg 21:46**

We got a few upcoming events. We've got, um, we've got a Spring Classic coming up in March. It's gonna be like a version of our Western Games, since those were supposed to be held out west. We just thought it'd be better just to go ahead and hold that at CMP where we don't have to travel with our employees as much. But it's gonna offer everything, basically, that the Talladega 600 did, from the rifle competitions that people come enjoy. Sign up right now is available on CMP.org.

**Greg 22:14**

And then we have our Talladega D-Day events. That's something we have every year. Like I said, the Spring Classic is something brand new. We're gonna try it out this year. But the Talladega D-Day event is, uh, we have that every year. Also, one of the things we're having May the 8<sup>th</sup> this year is "Shooter for Hooters" – that benefits, breast cancer awareness, raises a lot of money for that charity event. So I would encourage people to participate in that event by coming in shooting, or if you just want to make a donation to Shooter for Hooters, because that money goes for a great cause. And we look forward to working with them every single year.

**Ashley 21:29**

Alright, Greg, well, is there anything else about Talladega you want to tell us? You've told us a lot of really great information.

**Greg 22:14**

Yeah, there's a few things that, you know, just to kind of wrap up, that I'd like to share. Like I said earlier, one of my big, major jobs here at CMP is to raise awareness for certain events we're doing as far as the youth events. And that's really something I'm passionate about this year. We want to have more youth events – offer more to youth – because that is in our mission statement. Everything that we do...safety, competition...all comes back to, you know, that emphasis on youth. So, you know, what I'm doing to raise more money for our youth programs is offering sponsorships for businesses. They can sponsor for as little as \$100 up to, of course, as much as they want to. But, you know, a lot in the local community here have given \$100-sponsorships, \$250-sponsorships and even \$500-sponsorships. And that goes into our youth programs that I can do more for these youth programs. And the company will also get certain benefits. I'll give them free passes they can share with their employees to come out to

the range. And they will get a, some signage with their company logo on it out that will be displayed at the range for a year.

#### **Greg 24:02**

So it's a win-win for us and a win for the company because we are seeing, you know, around 3,000 shooters per month come to Talladega. So it's good advertising for them – it's cheap advertising. So I really want to put that out there to any business that would love to help sponsor some of our youth programs and tell them what they get.

#### **Greg 24:22**

And then also to offer individuals where they want to honor a loved one, or a veteran or just a shooting team – we offer lifetime pavers (engraved granite) that they can put on any of our ranges out there. We'll put them in on the firing line, and their paver will be there as long as the range is there.

#### **Greg 24:40**

So if anyone would be interested in doing that, I'm going to give out my cell phone number that they can call me at 256-622-4222, or they can go online at [theCMP.org](http://theCMP.org) and become a sponsor. Because that's what we really want to do – to help advance some of our programs, because we are a 501(c)(3), not for profit. So we're looking at sponsors to come in and help us.

#### **Greg 25:08**

In closing, I would like to say, you know, what I always say when I'm on a sales presentation, whether I'm on the radio or a podcast like this: At CMP, we look forward to hearing your shots being fired, because we are “The Home of Marksmanship.” So I appreciate your time, and thank you for this.

#### **Ashley 25:25**

Thank you so much. It was perfect. And thank you for allowing us to do this.

#### **Greg 25:30**

It was awesome. I appreciate you letting me do it.

#### **Ashley 25:36**

Greg is just the best. He really is someone passionate about his work and passionate about Talladega and the CMP. He really wants to give everyone the best experience possible and open up new possibilities, especially to youth. So if you'd like to talk to him about any of the opportunities he mentioned, or if you even have some suggestions of your own of some things that might be of interest, be sure to get in contact with him. And you can do that by email at [graines](mailto:graines@thecmp.org) – that's “g” as in “Greg” – [r-a-i-n-e-s@thecmp.org](mailto:r-a-i-n-e-s@thecmp.org). Or you can give the Talladega office a call at 256-474-4408. And you can use that number for any other questions you may have about the range. Or you can email them at [CMPTalladega@thecmp.org](mailto:CMPTalladega@thecmp.org) for more info.

**Ashley 26:36**

If you haven't made it out to Talladega, yet, I know it's tough right now, but you really should have it on your list of places to see. It's such an incredible place, and the staff within are so friendly and so helpful. I promise you that you won't regret it. If you want to learn more about Talladega Marksmanship Park for yourself, we have an entire webpage at [www.thecmp.org/Talladega](http://www.thecmp.org/Talladega). There, you can even find a Google Calendar of all of the upcoming events that the Park is offering. And, there's so much, I'm sure there's something going on there that you would enjoy.

**Ashley 27:08**

If you want to check out any of our podcasts at any time, they'll be available on our website under the "News and Media" tab on our very own CMP Podcast page, as well as through any of those apps that I mentioned before. This is all for you, so, I hope you'll enjoy what we've done and also what we have to come in the future.

**Ashley 27:26**

Alright, everyone. Well, until next time, be good out there. Stay warm. It's almost summer. We're getting closer...

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