

2024 PARIS OLYMPIC GAMES

SHOOTING CELEBRATES ITS GREATEST DAYS DURING THE 2024 PARIS OLYMPIC GAMES

By Gary Anderson, DCM Emeritus



The Opening Ceremony of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, on the 26th of July, ended with this iconic scene showing the Eiffel Tower in the distance and the launching of an Olympic flame.

Author's Personal Note: *Starting in 1960, when I was a 20-year-old alternate on the U.S. Olympic Team in Rome, I have participated in 13 different Olympic Games, three times as an athlete, five times as a Jury Member or Chairman, four times as an International Federation (ISSF) Technical Delegate and once as a Shooting Competition Manager. Starting with Tokyo 2021 and now with the 2024 Paris Olympics, I am seeing the Olympics as a fan who experienced the Games competitions through electronic media. I have literally seen the Olympic Games from every possible perspective. Through all these experiences, my belief in the Olympics and their ability to bring our diverse, hostile world a little closer together by teaching the values of fair play, mutual respect and friendship has never wavered. This **OTM** story shares my perspective on the Shooting events that took place during the 2024 Paris Olympic Games.*

Shooting's athletes, officials and fans completed ten days of Olympic Shooting competitions in late July and early August, during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. These competitions featured 340 athletes from 82 countries, who competed in 15 different gold medal events, five rifle, five

pistol and five shotgun. There were six events for men, six for women and three for mixed teams (one man and one woman). **Note:** *The author's article in the Summer 2024 **On the Mark**, "Shooting in the 2024 Olympic Games," provides a detailed explanation of the Olympic*

Shooting Program. Olympic Shooting is especially important to our nation's junior shooting programs because the Olympic dream inspires thousands of youths to try Shooting and hundreds of young athletes to strive for greatness in Shooting. This report on the Shooting events of the 33rd Olympiad highlights some aspects of these events that are important to juniors and their coaches.

OLYMPIC CEREMONIES LIKE NO OTHER

The French promised “*an Olympic Opening Ceremony like no other,*” and they delivered, magnificently. Many **OTM** readers were surely among the 28.6 million USA viewers who watched this great marvel on television. You were joined by more than a billion people worldwide and 300,000 plus spectators who lined the banks of the River Seine as the parade of nations athletes passed by in boats. Many will remember the rain, Beyonce introducing the USA Olympic Team, Lady Gaga and Celine Dion, the quirky dancers along the river and the spectacular light and laser displays. Olympic traditions were fulfilled with new and creative presentations of the parade of athletes, the arrival of the Olympic flame and torch lighting, the presentation and the raising of the Olympic flag, and always-the-same speeches by the IOC and Organizing Committee Presidents. Who can forget the mechanical horse racing down the Seine with the Olympic flag? Or what appeared to be the Olympic flame rising over Paris? And Yes, French President Emmanuel Macron did officially open the Games by stating, “*I declare open the Games of Paris, celebrating the 33rd Olympiad of the modern era.*”

The Closing Ceremony 16 days later was equally innovative, although it took place in the more traditional setting of the Olympic Stadium (*Stade de France*). These truly memorable Games were officially closed when the Olympic flame that departed from Greece (*Olympia*) in April was extinguished. The importance of the two ceremonies that open and close the Games lies in how they present the foundational meaning of the Olympic Games, to bring athletes from all over the world together in sports competitions that promote the Olympic values of excellence, respect and friendship. The mission of the Olympics is “to build a better world.”



This is the boat that carried the USA Olympic Team down the River Seine during the Opening Ceremony parade of nations.

SHOOTING HAD AN “EXCEPTIONAL” VENUE

The venues where Olympic sports competitions take place are, by tradition and practice, located in or close to the city that hosts the Games. In every previous Olympic Games going all the way back to 1896, Olympic Shooting venues were in or near the host city. That tradition was broken during the Paris Games when its Shooting events were conducted in Chateauroux, a French city 170 miles south of Paris. This degree of separation from the Olympic city was “exceptional.” Paris did not have a Shooting range large enough to host the Olympic Games. Constructing a new venue near Paris was considered, but the French Shooting Federation already had an excellent National Shooting Center in Chateauroux.



This graphic shows the layout of the Chateauroux Shooting Center. Note that there are different ranges for 10m, 25m, 50m, Shotgun and a separate Finals Hall.

2024 PARIS OLYMPIC GAMES

The Paris Olympic Committee decided to use that facility as its 2024 Shooting venue. Significant, expensive adaptations had to be made there to host Games Shooting events, but their conclusion was that this would be a more cost-effective solution. The Chateauroux range has an excellent reputation among ISSF federations, and it did a more-than-adequate job of hosting the 2024 Shooting events. However, separating the sport and its athletes and officials from so much Games' activity was not a totally satisfactory solution.

SAGEN MADDALENA WON THE USA'S FIRST MEDAL

Sagen Maddalena, a U.S. Army Soldier from Groveland, California ended a six-day USA medal drought by winning a silver medal on the seventh day of Shooting competitions. On day 2, Maddalena had qualified 7th in the 10m Air Rifle Women event. That got her into the final on the next day when she had a good final to finish 4th, 1.4 points shy of a bronze medal. Her second event, 50m Rifle Three-Positions Women, had qualifying on day 6 and the final on day 7. She and Qiongyue Zhang from China led all qualifiers with 593s. The eventual gold medal winner, Chiara Leone from Switzerland, qualified third at 592. Maddalena shot a superb final, coming agonizingly close to winning the gold medal. She was in the lead after her second kneeling series and again after shot #42. She won a silver/bronze tie-breaking shoot-off with Zhang after shot #44. Then it came down to the last shot (#45) and she still had a chance to win. Leone's lead was a mere 0.7, but she nailed a 10.8 on her last shot to win gold. Maddalena's 10.1

wrapped up her silver medal win. A silver medal was a win--in the Olympic Games winning any medal is a great victory.

Maddalena, who is now a Sergeant assigned to the Army Marksmanship Unit at Fort Moore, Georgia, got her start in shooting through a 4-H Shooting Sports program. She became a member of the California Grizzlies junior team, competing in Service Rifle competitions that included the National Matches at Camp Perry. While she was still a Junior in 2011, Maddalena earned the Distinguished Rifleman Badge (*With her International Distinguished Badge awarded in 2022, and her Distinguished Air Rifle Badge earned in 2023, she is now Triple Distinguished.*), she made the prestigious President's 100 twice. She was on the California Grizzlies team that won the National Junior Team Match (*Freedom's Fire Trophy*) in 2013. She was a college All-American when she competed for the University of Alaska-Fairbanks Rifle Team. She served as a CMP Junior Rifle Camp Counselor in 2017. Her international competition record as a USA Shooting Team member already includes many achievements, most notable was a gold medal in the 2021 World Cup Final. She qualified for the Tokyo Olympics where she finished 5th in the 50m 3-position event. Sagen Maddalena's advancement through her shooting career from starting to shoot to becoming an Olympic silver medalist is a model for junior shooters who aspire to achieve similar high honors.

THE GREATEST SKEET SHOOTER EVER

One of the most distinguished lists in Olympic history is the list of athletes who won four Olympic gold medals in the same event. Until now, there were only three male athletes who have done this: Al Oerter, Carl Lewis and Michael Phelps. Only one athlete in the history of Olympic Shooting, pistol shooter Jin Jongoh of Korea, has won four gold medals; his medals were won in two different events. In what was one of the greatest achievements of the entire 2024 Paris Olympics, USA skeet shooter Vincent Hancock added his name to that remarkable list.

Hancock won his first gold medal in Beijing 2008 at the age of 19. He won his second in London in 2012, finished out of the medals in 2016, then won again in Tokyo 2021. His pursuit of a fourth Men's Skeet gold medal in



This screenshot from the Olympic telecast shows Chiara Leone (SUI) and Sagen Maddalena (USA) firing their last shots that decided the gold and silver medals in the 50m Rifle Three-Position Women Final.

France was a big story. His quest for immortality was even more compelling because the second USA Skeet athlete, 24-year-old Conner Prince, who came within one target of denying him a gold medal and one of the USA's Skeet Women entrants, Austen Smith, have been coached by Hancock. They trained together at the Fort Worth, Texas Trap and Skeet Club.

This story line became even more enthralling when Prince led all qualifiers with a 124x125 plus 13 additional hits to take the number one position in the six-person final. There were two other 124s, Tammaro Cassandro of Italy at 124 plus 11 and Meng Yuan Lee from Taiwan at 124 plus 7. Hancock qualified fourth with a 123. Finals now are start-from-zero, but Hancock's fourth position in the final placed him at a disadvantage if there were elimination ties with higher ranked finalists. The two USA athletes dominated the final. With the other athletes eliminated, and with two more station 5 doubles to conclude the final, Hancock and Prince were tied at 54x56. Prince missed his first target; Hancock shattered all four to make Olympic history by winning his fourth Skeet Men gold medal with 58 final round hits. His protégé Conner Prince won the silver medal with 57. Vince Hancock now deserves to be accorded the title, "The Greatest Skeet Shooter Ever."

SKREET SHOOTERS LED THE WAY FOR THE USA

The USA finished third in the Shooting medal count, but this was because Team Hancock won four of the USA's five medals in the three Skeet events. In addition to the gold and silver medals won by Hancock and Prince, Austen Smith won the bronze medal in the Skeet Women event and the Hancock-Smith team won the silver medal in the Skeet Mixed Team event. The Skeet Women final took place on the day after the men's final. For that final, Austen Smith, like Conner Prince the day before, qualified for position number one. After 50 targets in the final, and the elimination of the 4th, 5th and 6th place finishers, Smith had totaled 45x50. This left her one target behind the eventual silver medalist, Amber Rutter of Great Britain. Austen Smith became a bronze medal winner in her first Olympic Games.

The Skeet Women event had a surprising gold medalist, Francisca



Sagen Maddalena (on left) and her partner Lane Ichord were the winners of the 2013 Freedom's Fire Trophy (National Junior Rifle Team Match). Maddalena and Ichord are shown here with their California Grizzlies coach Robert Taylor.

Crovetto from Chile. She finished the final in a tie with Rutter and won gold in a dramatic shoot-off. Rutter complained bitterly about the Referees who called her last target a miss; several people allegedly produced photos



Shown are the 2024 Olympic Skeet Men medalists. Vince Hancock (center) made Olympic history by winning his fourth gold medal in this event. The silver medalist is Conner Prince USA (left). The bronze medalist is Meng Yuan Lee from Taiwan.

2024 PARIS OLYMPIC GAMES



USA Skeet Women bronze medalist Austen Smith lists Vincent Hancock as her personal coach. Smith joined with Hancock to win silver in the Skeet Mixed Team event. She and Hancock were the USA's two double medalists.

and videos showing a hit. Crovetto, who placed 8th, 19th and 23rd in three prior Olympics, became only the third Olympic gold medalist ever from Chile. Amazingly, both women's shotgun events were won by athletes from Latin American countries. Adriana Ruono Oliva became Guatemala's first Olympic gold medalist ever when she won the Trap Women event

The final Shooting event at Chateauroux was the Skeet Mixed Team event. The USA mixed team of Hancock and Smith looked to be formidable. They shot a 148x150 team qualifying score, but the Italian team of Gabriele Rossetti and Diana Bacosi and Gabriele Rossetti had a 149 to

set up their gold medal match. The Italians, who had disappointed in the individual events with 15th and 7th place finishes respectively, were in top form in the final and prevailed over the USA team 45 to 44. This became the USA's third silver medal. The medal wins by Crovetto and the Italian Mixed Team certainly became lessons in perseverance.

OLYMPIC SHOOTING MEDAL TABLE (National Ranking)

Nation		Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
	People's Republic of China	5	2	3	10
	Republic of Korea	3	3	0	6
	United States of America	1	3	1	5
	Italy	1	2	1	4
	Great Britain	1	1	0	2
	Guatemala	1	0	1	2
	Switzerland	1	0	1	2
	Chile	1	0	0	1
	Serbia	1	0	0	1

The official Shooting Medal Table shows that the leading nations in the 2024 Olympics were China and Korea. The USA was third, just ahead of Italy. Seventeen different nations won medals. Two of Shooting's strongest nations, France (1) and Germany (0) had disappointing Games. It is also interesting to note that China won all five of its gold medals in rifle events while Korea won all three of its gold medals in women's events.

CHINA AND KOREA DOMINATED THE RIFLE AND PISTOL EVENTS

Except for Sagen Maddalena's heroics, the USA was a non-player in the Olympic rifle and pistol events. In 2024, those events were dominated by young athletes from China and Korea. It started with a

Chinese victory in the Games' very first gold medal final. Since 1984, Shooting has had the honor of awarding the Games first gold medal. USA athletes Nancy Napolski Johnson (2000) and Virginia Thrasher (2016) previously earned this honor by winning Women's Air Rifle gold medals. This year, a change in ISSF rules requiring all finals except Mixed Team finals to be conducted on the day after an event's qualification stage, meant that a Mixed Team final was the only one that could be conducted early on the Games' first day of competition. The Paris Games first gold medal would go to the winner of the 10m Air Rifle Mixed Team event.

Two Chinese teen-agers, 17-year-old Huang Yuting, and 19-year-old Sheng Lihao, and a Korean team that included a 19-year-old, led all qualifiers to advance to that gold medal match, which was won by China 16 to 12. The presentation of the Games' first medals has traditionally been done by the IOC President, but Thomas Bach did not appear for this ceremony due to Chateauroux's distant location. Another IOC member presented the medals in a ceremony that was over 30 minutes late getting started.

The second day of competition featured the men's and women's 10m Air Rifle finals. Sheng Lihao, who finished 2nd behind Will Shaner (USA), in the Tokyo Olympics 10m Air Rifle Men event, when he was just 16, became a double gold medal winner, to establish himself as another in a long line of truly great Chinese rifle shooters. The women's air rifle final ended with the closest margin of victory enjoyed by any Shooting gold medalist. That final ended up being a contest between China's Yuting and a 16-year-old high school student from Korea, Hyojin Ban. Ban and Yuting led all qualifiers with respective scores of 634.5 and 632.6. In a final where the lead changed multiple times, they ended tied at 251.8. The gold medal had to be decided by a one-shot shoot-off. Huting shot a 10.3, Ban became the gold medalist with a 10.4. Ban's shot was 0.25mm closer to the center. A difference of one-fourth of a millimeter decided the gold medal!

Two young Korean athletes won the women's pistol events. 19-year-old



This screenshot from the 10m Air Rifle Women final shows the tie-breaking shots for gold medalist Hyojin Ban (Korea, 10.4) and Huang Yuting (China, 10.3). The difference between the gold and silver medal was one-fourth of a millimeter!

Je Jin Oh won Air Pistol while 21-year-old Jiin Yang won the women's 25m event. The men's pistol events were won by Chinese athletes, Yu Xie in 10m Air Pistol and Li Yuehong in 25m Rapid-Fire Pistol.

WHAT IS THE TURKISH PISTOL SHOOTER MEME?

The Shooting athlete who gained the most worldwide attention during the Olympics, both for himself and for the sport of Shooting, was Yusef Dikec, a 51-year-old pistol shooter from Turkey. Dikec partnered with 24-year-old Seyval Tarhan (*she was a Junior World Champion in 2018*) to win a silver medal in the 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team event. Dikec and Tarhan qualified for the gold medal dual by shooting a combined 582 x 600 that ranked first in the qualification stage. In gold medal matches, the two athletes



Yusef Dikec, TUR, shooting his air pistol and Mondo Duplantis, SWE, in his Turkish Pistol Shooter pose while celebrating his pole vault world record.

2024 PARIS OLYMPIC GAMES

Olympic Shooting Results

The table below provides scores and place finishes for the USA Olympic Shooting Team. Anyone who would like to review all the Paris 2024 Olympic Shooting Results should download the Shooting Results Book from the ISSF website:

<https://backoffice.issf-sports.org/media/calendar/2024/2728/completeresult/OG-Paris-2024-Results-Book.pdf>

on each team shoot single shots, with two points going to the team with the highest combined score. A team must gain 16 points to win. Turkey's team led until the last two shots when they were overtaken by Serbia's team of Arunovic and Mikec, 16 to 14. Dikec attracted media attention during the final because of his unassuming, iconoclastic approach to pistol shooting. He didn't have any special equipment, he wore a Turkey T-shirt, and his regular eyeglasses, no special shooting glasses or blinders. It was just him, his pistol and pellets. He put his left hand in his pocket and shot.

USA SHOOTING TEAM OLYMPIC GAMES RESULTS

Day	Event	Athlete	Qualification Score	Qualif. Place	Final Score	Final Ranking
1	10m AR Mixed	Mary Tucker & Rylan Kissell	626.0	13th		
		Sagen Maddalena & Ivan Roe	624.9	18th		
1 & 2	10m AP Men	<i>No USA entry – USA did not earn an Olympic participation quota</i>				
1 & 2	10m AP Women	Katelyn Abeln	570-16X	24th		
		Alexis Lagan	570-15X	25th		
2 & 3	10m AR Men	Ivan Roe	626.3	34th (tie)		
		Rylan Kissell	626.3	34th (tie)		
2 & 3	10m AR Women	Sagen Maddalena	631.4	7th*	207.4	4th
		Mary Tucker	625.2	32nd		
3 & 4	10m AP Mixed Team	<i>No USA entry – USA did not qualify any men pistol athletes</i>				
3 & 4	Trap Men	Derrick Mein	122 x 125 + 13	6th*	26 x 30	5th
		William Hinton	116 x 125	27th		
4 & 5	Trap Women	Ryann Phillips	116 x 125	16th		
		Rachel Tozier	116 x 125	18th		
5 & 6	50m Rifle 3-P Men	Ivan Roe	587	20th		
		Rylan Kissell	579	39th		
6 & 7	50m Rifle 3-P Women	Sagen Maddalena	593	1st*	463.0	SILVER
		Mary Tucker	579	25th		
7 & 8	25m Pistol Women	Katelyn Abeln	585	8th	5 x 15	8th
		Ada Korkhin	571	32nd		
7 & 8	Skeet Men	Conner Prince	124 x 125 + 12	1st*	57 x 60	SILVER
		Vince Hancock	123 x 125	4th*	58 x 60	GOLD
8 & 9	Skeet Women	Austen Smith	122 x 125 + 14	1st*	45 x 50	BRONZE
		Dania Vizzi	118 x 125	12th		
9 & 10	25m Rapid-Fire Pistol Men	Keith Sanderson	579	19th		
		Henry Turner Leverett	573	25th		
10	Skeet Mixed Team	Vince Hancock & Austen Smith	148 x 150	2nd	44 x 50	SILVER
		Conner Prince & Dania Vizzi	144 x 150	6th		

*Athlete's qualification score qualified for the event final

Dikec's simple approach to competition and his classic pistol shooter pose became a meme that created an internet sensation. People all over the world were talking about the "Turkish Pistol Shooter" and assuming his pistol shooter pose. This meme became an Olympic Games highlight when Swedish pole vaulter Mondo Duplantis assumed the pistol shooter pose during his celebration after setting a new world record (6.24m). Other athletes followed Duplantis' example and pistol shooting gained worldwide attention that will help it attract new participants. Even Le Phryge, the Paris 2024 mascot, had to try pistol shooting.

SEVEN MEDALISTS WERE JUNIORS ACCORDING TO USA RULES

The 342 athletes who participated in 2024 Olympic Shooting ranged in age from 16 (*Mohammed Beyranvand, Iran*) to age 60 (*Lionel Martinez, Venezuela*). There were seven medal winners who won nine medals (20% of all Olympic Shooting medals) in this year's Games who would qualify as juniors in USA competition (see *chart*). The fact that six of these young medal winners were from China and Korea, the two nations that finished first and second in Shooting's overall medal table, indicates how the leading nations in Shooting have confidence that these junior age athletes can compete at the highest international levels. Hyojun Ban from the Republic of Korea became the youngest woman ever, at the age of 16, to win an Olympic Shooting medal when she won the 10m Air Rifle Women event. Three years ago in Tokyo, Lihao Sheng of China became the youngest athlete ever to win an Olympic Shooting medal, at the age of 16, when he finished second behind the USA's gold medalist, William Shaner. In France, Sheng, now 19 years of age, but still a junior, became a double gold medal winner. On another side of Shooting's age range, Nino Salukvadze of Georgia, at age 55, became the first female athlete to compete in ten consecutive Olympic Games. In 1988 in Seoul, Salukvadze, at age 19, won gold in the 25m Pistol Women event and silver in the 10m Air Pistol Women event. In Paris, she had the honor of once again being her nation's flag bearer in the Games' Opening Ceremony.

The USA Shooting Team had a successful Olympic Games, winning five medals and placing third in the medal count. The chart on page 12 summarizes the performances of each of the USA athletes who competed at Chateauroux in the 2024 Paris Games.

THE YOUNGEST 2024 OLYMPIC MEDAL WINNERS

Athlete	Nation	Event	Place	Age
SHENG, Lihao	China	10m AR Mixed Team 10m AR Men	Gold Gold	19
HUANG, Yuting	China	10m Mixed Team 10m AR Women	Gold Silver	17
BAN, Hyojin	Korea	10m AR Women	Gold	16
OH, Ye Jin	Korea	10m AP Women	Gold	19
ZHANG, Qiongyue	China	50m Rifle 3-P Women	Bronze	20
JIANG, Yiting	China	Skeet Mixed Team	Bronze	20
LE, Alexandra	Kazakhstan	10m Rifle Mixed Team	Bronze	20
RAMITA, Ramita	India	10m AR Mixed Team 10m AR Women	6th 7th	20
CHOE, Daehan	Korea	10m AR Men	7th	19

All these athletes would qualify as Juniors in CMP competitions.

About the Author

Gary Anderson, Director of Civilian Marksmanship Emeritus, retired as the full-time CMP Director at the end of 2009. He continues to work with the CMP as the senior marksmanship instructor. During his remarkable career, he won two Olympic gold medals, seven World Championships and 16 National Championships. He served as a Vice President of the International Shooting Sports Federation (ISSF) from 1990 through 2018. He is a former Nebraska State Senator and Past President of USA Shooting. He served as a Technical Delegate for Shooting during the 2012 and 2016 Olympic Games as well as for the 2014 and 2018 World Shooting Championships.

In 2012, the International Olympic Committee awarded Gary Anderson with the Olympic Order, its highest honor "for outstanding services to the Olympic Movement."

In 2014, the CMP expanded its world-class air gun center at Camp Perry and renamed the facility the Gary Anderson CMP Competition Center, in honor of Anderson's contributions to the organization and the marksmanship community.

