Beijing 2008

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Olympic Goals Reached by the U.S. Shooting Team
By Sommer Wood, CMP Program Manager

It is hard to imagine that three years away from the Olympics anyone could predict how many medals a program is going to win. That is exactly what the U.S. Olympic Committee asked of USA Shooting Director Bob Mitchell and his coaching staff in 2005. The number they gave the USOC was six, a lofty goal considering that only three shooting medals were brought home by Americans in 2004, and the predicted number had not been reached by a U.S. Shooting Team since the 1964 team won seven medals. But once this commitment was made, the team set-out on a mission to reach its mark.

Shooting holds a special place in the Olympics, awarding the first medal of the Games in Women’s 10M Air Rifle. In Beijing shooting had the third largest number of participating counties behind athletics (track and field) and swimming with 103 countries represented. The events are broken into men’s and women’s categories for Rifle, Pistol and Shotgun disciplines, and competitions are held over the course of nine days.

The first day of competition started out with Women’s 10M Air Rifle followed by Men’s 10M Air Pistol. The women’s event is relatively short, only 40-shots, followed by a 10-shot Final between the top eight competitors at the end of the qualification round. This meant that before lunch on the first day of competition, the first gold medal of the Beijing Olympics would be awarded, and the pressure was high to claim that notable position. No one felt that pressure more that China’s Du Li. In 2004 Du Li claimed the gold medal in this event and there were expectations for her to repeat as China desperately hoped to claim the first gold in their Games. But even great champions like Du Li can succumb to pressure, and the weight of her country on her shoulders proved too much as she finished in fifth place.

In the end, the day belonged to Katerina Emmons of the Czech Republic, the 2004 10M Air Rifle bronze medalist and wife of U.S. Olympic shooter Matt Emmons. Emmons shot an Olympic Record 400 in the qualifying round of competition, and followed that performance with a 103.5 in the final to secure the gold medal. Jamie Beyerle from Lebanon, PA just missed the bronze with a strong performance in her first Olympics. She shot a 397 in the qualification round and a 102.8 final to finish just 1.2 points out of medal contention. Emily Caruso from Fairfield, CT finished 15th overall with a 395.

The second shooting event of the day was Men’s 10M Air Pistol, which provided a surprise performance from both of the USA shooters in the event. Also, all eyes were on China’s Pang Wei to see if pressure would claim a second hometown favorite that day. This time though, the 2006 Men’s Air Pistol World Champion proved that he could withstand the first day pressure as he shot a solid 586 in the qualification round followed by a 102.2 final to claim the first shooting gold medal for China.

The biggest surprise in the Men’s 10M Air Rifle event came from the two Americans, Jason Turner of Colorado Springs, CO and Brian Beaman of Selby, SD, both unexpectedly made the final in forth and sixth place. Of the two, only Turner had any significant international experience and was on the 2004 Olympic team. The 24-year-old Beaman was originally a rifle shooter and competed for Jacksonville State University, he had only been competing in pistol for a couple of years. At the end of the final, both Americans were tied for forth place and a sudden death shoot-off was needed to determine their placement. Beaman shot a 10.3 but Turner overtook him with a 10.5 to claim forth, leaving Beaman in fifth. This became significant several days later when the third place finisher Kim Jong Su of North Korea was stripped of the bronze medal for testing positive for the beta-blocker propanolol, which is a banned substance by the IOC because it slows the heart rate. This disqualification moved Turner into third place to claim the bronze medal for the USA.

Day two of competition was not particularly noteworthy for Team USA. In Men’s Trap, Bret Erickson of Muenster, TX and Dominic Grazioli of...
Sighting Shots

Montbello Warriors Host Memorial Postal Match- Montbello Warriors Army Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC) is conducting their 2nd annual class project that is dedicated towards remembering a former cadet that served in their program. Sergeant Louis R. Reyes was an active member of the marksmanship program and loved to compete. Upon graduation, he joined the Colorado National Guard in 1997 and was assigned to the 947th Engineer Company in Durango, Colorado.

While deployed, Sergeant Louis R. Reyes died en route to Ali Al Salem, Kuwait, when the bus in which he was riding rolled over on 18 November 2005. SGT Reyes died at the age of 26. Once notified of this horrible accident by his family, the Montbello Warriors decided to honor Sergeant Reyes by coining a marksmanship postal match in his memory. To register for this postal match contact herbert_maison@dpsk12.org or visit the website at www.jrotc.pbwiki.org.

CMP Marksmanship Center Open House. The CMP and Camp Perry Training Site staff will have an open house at the CMP Marksmanship Center at Camp Perry on Saturday, November 15 from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Please come and enjoy the new facility! There will be a “turkey shoot” center shot competition on the 10 meter electronic targets. Top 15 center shots winners will win a turkey. There will be displays and information about all CMP programs, and a brief firearms safety class running continuously throughout the day. The CMP store will be open during the hours of the open house. Free hotdogs and beverages too! Details will be posted on the CMP website soon.

CMP Videos posted- The CMP recently posted videos featuring our new air rifle ranges. Videos include the Junior Olympics which took place in Anniston, Alabama, a video tour of the new air CMP Competition Center-North at Camp Perry and some of the first youth training activities that took place there. Competitors and coaches are encouraged to view these videos at http://www.odcmp.com/Videos.htm.

2008 - 2009 JROTC Air Rifle Postal Competition- JROTC Teams may now begin ordering targets for the 2008-2009 JROTC Air Rifle Postal Competition. The match program and order forms are posted at www.odcmp.com/3P/JROTC.htm.

2009 Army Open Air Rifle Championship- The Match Bulletin for the 2009 Army Open Air Rifle Championship will be posted on the CMP homepage on 1 November 2008. The postal phase of the competition will be completed on 22 March 2009 and the National Championship will take place 14-16 May 2009 at Fort Benning, GA. This competition is open to all juniors.

2009 Camp Perry Open - The program for the 2009 Camp Perry Open will soon be posted on the CMP homepage. This 3x20 Air Rifle Match will take place 16-18 January 2009 at the new CMP Competition Center-North.

New Daisy Air Rifle Price- The CMP announced new prices for Daisy sporter air rifles offered through the CMP Junior Rifle Purchase Program. CMP had to increase its prices for the M853, M853CM, M887, M888 and the extra CO2 cylinders due to price increases at Daisy Outdoor Products. The prices shown on the CMP Affiiate Rifle Purchase Form include shipping for all air rifles and cylinders shipped directly from Daisy. These prices, including shipping, are still the best available for beginning and advanced sporter air rifle marksmanship. To order Daisy air rifles and accessories through the CMP, please review the CMP Affiliate Rifle Purchase Program brochure and download the order form at www.odcmp.com/Programs/JrRifles.htm. For questions regarding these air rifles, please email CMP Club Rifle Sales at clubrifle@odcmp.com or contact Mike Conrad at 419-635-2141 ext 1116.

On the Cover: Photo from the Simatai section of the Great Wall of China which is 120K northeast of Beijing. It is an unrestored section of the Great Wall that dates back to 1368, the beginning of the Ming Dynasty. Photo taken by Sommer Wood.
Juniors Make Their Mark at 2008 National Matches and CMP Games Events

By Steve Cooper, CMP Writer

Junior shooters made their presence felt at the 2008 National Matches and CMP Games Events both with their shooting excellence and enthusiastic participation in matches and clinics.

Juniors with names like Rebekah Jennings, Ryan Nichols, Tyler Rico, Amanda Elsenboss, Jacob Whetham, Kathryn Bugg, Charles Opalewski II, Eric Curavo, Christopher Hudock and the California Grizzlies will all be fondly remembered by the class of 2008 for their outstanding performances in pistol and rifle competitions.

PISTOL MATCHES

In pistol, Rebekah Jennings won the .22 caliber President’s Pistol Junior Trophy match, with a 371-10X aggregate score, comprised of a 183-3X, 94-4X and 94-3X in slow, timed and rapid fire.

She was one of three young women scoring in the top 10 in this year’s match, with Heather Deppe firing a 369-10X to finish second for the second consecutive year. Michael Thola took third place honors with a 355-4X aggregate score.

The National Trophy Individual Junior award went to Ryan Nichols who fired a 273-4X, ahead of Jennings (268-4X) and Matthew Hoff (253-4X). Nichols shot an 87-3X, 95-1X and 91-0X in slow, timed and rapid fire.

The two-person National Trophy Team Junior match was won by the ORPA YAT #2 team of Joseph Totts (275-6X) and Nichols (251-1X) who shot a combined 526-7X team aggregate. Totts shot an 84-0X, 99-4X and a 92-2X and Nichols shot a 78-0X, 92-1X and 81-0X individual score.

The Texas Jr. Blue team of Deppe and Jennings placed second with a team composite score of 523-9X and the Texas Jr. Silver team of Rafe Corley and Jacob Hedrick scored a 498-4X for third. Jennings led all junior pistol shooters in individual scoring over the three matches with a 911-19X aggregate.

RIFLE MATCHES

In highpower rifle, Jacob Whetham was not only the high junior in the President’s 100 Trophy Match, he finished eighth overall, placing him in very rare company among and ahead of many of the nation’s elite service rifle shooters.

Whetham fired alongside 1,167 fellow President’s Match competitors to enter the 20-shooter final in 12th place. Placement inside the top 20 qualified him for the “best of the best” 10-round shoot-off. In the shot-by-shot finale at 600 yards, he fired 97-6X to total 390-12X and finish eighth overall, only three total points behind the winner, SFC Norman Anderson, USAR.

The winner of the President’s Rifle Match receives a congratulatory letter from the President of the United States and the President’s Match, National Trophy Individual Match and National Team Trophy Match using a factory Bushmaster rifle. Daniel Atkins fired a 1232-34X, earning the President’s Bushmaster Cup, and James Clark scored a 1221-24X for second overall.

Amanda Elsenboss placed fifth overall and won the junior Golden Eagle Trophy in the National Trophy Individual Match with an aggregate score of 494-19X in service rifle competition.

Nick Mowrer, who finished 11th overall, placed second in junior ranking with a 491-18X and Peter Lawless fired a 486-15X aggregate to finish third.

Elsenboss also won the overall Bushmaster Cup Trophies by firing a 1264-34X - the highest individual aggregate score (the Mountain Man Aggregate) comprised by the President’s Match, National Trophy Individual Match and National Team Trophy Match using a factory Bushmaster rifle.

Continued on Page 6
School is back in session and seniors are narrowing their list of prospective colleges. By now, you should be registering for the NCAA Eligibility Center to make yourself eligible to compete in college.

In the last addition of College Connection, I discussed the steps you need to take to grab a coach’s attention. In this fourth and final installment, I will discuss the difference between Official and Unofficial college visits.

**OFFICIAL VISIT**

If a coach is intrigued by your shooting performances, he or she may invite you on a recruiting trip with all expenses paid. Before we get into the specifics, it is important to note the steps you have to take to be eligible for one of these trips. Step one is to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center, formerly known as the NCAA Clearinghouse. Step two is to take, or be scheduled to take, the ACT or SAT. Step three is to provide the school with a copy of your high school transcripts. Only then can you go on a recruiting trip.

An official visit to a college is a trip with all expenses paid by the school. This includes a plane ticket, housing and meals. Prospective athletes are allowed a maximum of five official visits during their recruiting phase. If you take a sixth, you or the school could be penalized. While on your recruiting trip, you can spend a total of 48 hours on campus. Before you and the coach schedule a trip, be sure to tell the coach if you have any kind of academic scholarships because that may determine if you should go on an official or unofficial visit. Your academic scholarship money could count against the rifle team.

From the moment you arrive on campus, to the moment you leave, every minute of your trip is going to be scheduled. The coach’s job is to “wow” you by showing you everything their school has to offer. At the start of your trip you can expect to be in meetings with the coach and athletic department. This is the business portion of your trip. The head coach will probably present a four year plan that includes where you will fit in on the team and what to expect with your studies. Your next meeting will probably involve the compliance office. Their job is to run through all of the rules that pertain to your trip. This meeting is particularly important because you can learn the basics of being a student athlete.

When the meetings are over, the fun part of the trip begins. One of the first things you will do is tour the campus. Some of the team members may accompany you to give you a chance to get to know them. The team will take you out to dinner and possibly to a football or basketball game.

It is very important that you keep an open mind during the trip. It is your recruiting trip, but you are also being evaluated by the coach and shooters. If you don’t make a positive impression with them, then there is a good chance they will not offer you a spot on the team.

**UNOFFICIAL VISIT**

Unofficial visits are freebies for a coach. If you decide to visit a school at your expense, coaches will not hesitate to show you around and answer questions. Unlike official visits, there are no limits to how long you can stay on campus. The only time you cannot take an unofficial visit is during a “dead period.” Dead periods are the couple of days before a signing period, this prevents coaches from contacting you while you and your family make a final decision on which school you will attend.

Unofficial visits give you the opportunity to make your own schedule for the trip. Below, is a list of things to do:

1. **Meet the coach and team** – The most important factor of whether or not you want to shoot on a college rifle team is to determine if you will fit in with the team.
2. **Tour the Campus** – It is very important to determine whether or not you like the campus. Visit the rifl range, library, dormitories, athletic department, etc.
3. **Meet with College Advisors** – If you know what you want to major in, schedule a meeting with an advisor who can go over your course work and better prepare you for the years ahead.
4. **Sample the campus cuisine** – Be sure you know what the food is like. This can be a big determining factor in how much money you invest into campus meal plans.
5. **Look into joining a club** – Everyone needs a way to escape from their day to day life and joining a club is a good way to do that. It is also a great way to meet new people.

When your visits are all said and done, you and your family should sit down and determine where you want to enroll. Academics should be your number one priority. There is a saying about student athletes, “The student comes before the athlete,” and you cannot be an athlete without the grades. Only then should you consider the other factors. By prioritizing your needs, there is a good chance you will choose the school that is right for you.

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**Brad Donoho** is a graduate of the University of Kentucky where he shot for the Wildcats Varsity Rifle Team for four years. He was a Team Captain his junior year. Subsequent to his graduation, he also served as Assistant Rifle Team Coach.
and third place in the junior Bushmaster Cup.

**TEAM RIFLE**

The Arizona Junior Gold team of Tyler Rico and Andrew Swazey won the Whistler Boy Trophy by scoring a combined aggregate total of 964-24X, edging out defending Whistler Boy champion WSRPA (Washington State Rifle and Pistol Association) Bad Apples (963-26X).

Kathryn Bugg earned the top spot in the Whistler Boy individual rankings with an aggregate score of 489-21X. Nick Mowrer (488-16X), Tyler Rico (486-12X) and Christopher Hudock (484-16X) rounded out the top five positions.

In 2007, Rico, 13, became the youngest shooter ever to earn a Distinguished Rifleman Badge. In addition to the Whistler Boy team trophy, he took 22nd place overall in the President’s Trophy Match and earned the number four individual ranking in Whistler Boy.

Rico’s Arizona SRP Gold team finished second to the California Grizzlies in the National Trophy Infantry Team Match, also known as the “rattle battle,” by 38 points. Washington’s WSRPA Bad Apples took third place.

The California Grizzlies NTIT team, comprised of Cheyanne Acebo, David Bahten, Kathryn Bugg, Anthony Henderson, Chad Kurgan and Joshua Lehn won the junior category in the Infantry Trophy Team Match with a score of 1233.

The Grizzlies’ National Trophy Team Match entry of Cheyanne Acebo, Bugg, Bahten, Kurgan, Henderson and Melissa Acebo defeated the Chattahoochee Rifle Gun Club and Wisconsin Sate Jr’s who won second and third place, respectively.

The following shooters earned their place on the National Junior Highpower Rifle Team by virtue of their aggregate scores in the Presidents, National Trophy Individual and Whistler Boy Matches. This “all-star” team placed their names on the National Junior Highpower Trophy Team by virtue of their aggregate scores in the Presidents, National Trophy Individual and Whistler Boy Matches. This “all-star” team placed their names on the National Junior Highpower Trophy Team.

Christopher Hudock was a double winner by leading all shooters and the junior division in the Spring 1917, John C. Garand Match with a score of 277-3X. Bobseine was followed by Tanner Kern (277-2X), Michael Lucky (275-3X), Joseph Ohlinger (272-3X) and Ike Bobsine (270-3X) in firing the venerable World War II semiautomatic.

Eric Curavo led all 26 junior shooters in the M1 Carbine Match with a score of 344-2X. Curavo and fellow competitors used their .30 caliber carbines for the third year in CMP competition. Michael Beck (340-3X), Dillon Stegeman (337-0X), John Skowronek (336-1X) and Tanner Kern (332-0X) followed Curavo.

Curavo also proved proficient with his bolt-action CZ453 to win the junior division of the telescopic class in this year’s Rimfire Sporter Match. The Rimfire Sporter event features common .22 caliber sporting rifles free of specialty target shooting accessories such as thumbhole stocks, heavy barrels, match triggers, etc.

This friendly CMP event was created seven years ago to introduce new shooters to a competitive shooting sports scene without complexity. Shooters fire prone slow, prone rapid, sitting slow and sitting rapid at 50 yards and standing slow and standing rapid at 25 yards for a total of 60 rounds.

This year 45 junior shooters participated in the T-Class and Curavo’s score of 585-24X was tops in junior and good enough for fourth overall out of 180 T-Class competitors. Lucas Boord (584-19X) took second place and finished fifth overall. Colin Vander Veen won third with a 583-20X, while Natalie Harper (582-19X) and Ben Cleland (573-21X) took fourth and fifth respectively.

Vander Veen won the 4-H Junior T-Class event with a score of 583-20X. In the open sights or O-Class, Charles Opalewski II won fifth overall out of 29 shooters and first place among juniors with a score of 570-16X. Eric Curavo, who also moved over to shoot in O-Class, scored a 553-11X for second place. Ben Cleland (552-10X), Brian

Several clinics took place at the 2008 National Rifle and Pistol Matches that allowed juniors to improve on their skills. Two that took place during Highpower phase were the Small Arms Firing School and the Marine Corps Junior Highpower Clinic.
Hill (552-9X) and John Lewis (534-10X) filled out the top five slots, respectively.

Opalewski also won the 4-H Junior O-Class event with a score of 570-16X.

**AIR GUN EVENTS**

There were approximately 147 juniors who participated in the 2008 Air Gun Events at Camp Perry this year. It was the first time the new CMP 80-firing point Marksmanship Center was used for National Match air pistol and air rifle events.

Richard Kang won the National Matches 60-Shot air pistol championship with a score of 567. Tony Silva took second with a 559 and Steve Locatelli won third place, shooting a score of 557.

Charles Holt III won the 30-Shot air pistol match with a score of 287. Giovanni Gonzalez placed second with a 286 and Tony Silva placed third with a 282.

US Army Sgt. Brandon Green, the first recipient of the Junior Distinguished Badge for Air Rifle Shooting, won the National Matches 20-Shot No-Jacket Sporter, unlimited re-entry air rifle match with a score of 187.

Robert Taylor II took second with a score of 185 and John Machiorlatti finished in third with a score of 181.

In the 10-meter Precision Air Rifle 60-Shot championship, David Sprecher won first place with a score of 586. Harold Gray took second with a 584 and Victoria Brown won third place with a 577.

Ethel Alves won the Precision Air Rifle 30-Shot Re-Entry match with the best 30-shot score counting with a score of 295. Second place went to Michael Liuzza who fired a 292 and third was won by Ryan Williams with a 287.

Selmer Brooke won the 20-Shot SR Precision Air Rifle Re-Entry championship with a score of 195 on an SR target. Wesley Shumaker won second place with a score of 192 and Brad Driscoll won third place with a 190.

Tim Calvin won the 20-Shot SR Precision Air Rifle Re-Entry Sporter-With-Jacket championship with a score of 190. Andrew Swazey took second place honors with a score of 187 and Thomas Schulz took third with a 186.

**CLINICS**

Junior shooters picked up invaluable tips and techniques at a variety of CMP clinics during the 2008 National Matches and CMP Games Events all summer long.

The clinics provided both new topics and second looks at basic marksmanship. Many of the clinic attendees said they gained new knowledge, but felt reassured by the amount of fundamental information that was shared by instructors and by some of the world’s finest competitive shooters.

The Small Arms Firing School clinics for pistol and later for rifle, gave juniors an opportunity to learn about all important aspects of competitive shooting

from the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit of Fort Benning, Georgia. Topics ranged from safety to organizational skills to practical methods of improving results on the range.

The USAMU clinics provided in-class lectures, question and answer sessions and on-the-firing-line practical training using the Beretta M9 during the pistol phase of the matches, 7-8 July, and M16A2 during the rifle phase, 26-27 July. At the conclusion of each clinic, participants fired in an Excellence-In-Competition Match where they not only were given the opportunity to hone their skills, but also an opportunity to earn leg points toward their Distinguished Badge.

The U.S. Marine Corps, in cooperation with the CMP, once again offered its Junior Highpower Rifle Clinic to 146 junior shooters on 25-27 July. The clinic began with class instruction that included the effects of weather, how to properly use and modify equipment, and rulebook requirements for shooting positions. Days two and three were spent shooting on the range firing at 200, 300 and 600 yards where juniors were being coached by Marine Corps Rifle Team members.

A number of additional clinics, some specific to CMP Games Events were also conducted, including the CMP’s M1 Garand, Springfield, Vintage Rifle and Rimfire Sporter clinics and the Hornady Reloading.

For detailed information about junior shooting results, upcoming matches and clinics, log onto www.odemp.com.
San Antonio, TX finished 22nd and 23rd respectively. Women’s 10M Air Pistol was the other event held on day two, and Americans Brenda Shinn from Redondo Beach, CA and Rebecca Snyder from Grand Junction, CO finished far out of medal contention in 37th and 41st place.

On day three, Corey Cogdell of Eagle River, Alaska claimed the second shooting medal for the U.S. Team with a bronze in Women’s Trap. Her third place finish was the highest the 21-year-old had ever had in her limited international experience.

Cup. Cogdell’s medal hopes came down to her experience and her highest international performance level, both fell short of medal contention in Beijing, shooting a 591 and 590 in the 60-shot qualification round, which placed them in 23rd and 27th respectively. The big story of the day came from India’s Abinav Bindra who won the Men’s 10M Air Rifle Event to claim that country’s first ever individual gold medal.

Men’s Free Pistol and Double Trap were on the line-up for day four, and after the surprise performance from the USA on day one in Air Pistol hopes were up for a strong showing in the Free Pistol event. But the shots fell just short. U.S. Army NCO Daryl Szarenski and Jason Turner finished 14th and 21st respectively.

There was a gold medal performance for the USA on day four though from Walton “Glenn” Eller in Men’s Double Trap. Eller, of Katy, TX and the Army Marksmanship Unit, shot Olympic Record scores in both the qualification and final rounds enroute to claiming his gold. The journey to the gold medal included 15th and 17th place finishes in the 2000 and 2004 Olympics. However, in the last two years, Eller started making strong gains on the international scene with several medal-winning performances leading up to the Beijing Games.

Women’s 25M Pistol was the only event on day five and it was no surprise when China’s Chen Ying claimed the third shooting Gold Medal for her country. Representing the USA were Elizabeth Callahan of Columbia, SC and Rebecca Snyder of Colorado Springs, CO, both shooters finished with a 575 to place 25th and 28th. The story of the day though came from Callahan; a 56-year-old retired Washington DC Metropolitan Police Officer, who became the oldest known woman to compete for the USA in a Summer or Winter Olympic Games.

Day six was busy for the American women, with medal contenders in both the Women’s 50M Rifle and Skeet events. On the rifle range, first time Olympians Jamie Beyerle and Sandra Fong were on the line for team USA. Beyerle had barely missed a medal days before in 10M Air Rifle, and at the end of the 60-shot qualification round she entered the 50M final in fifth place. Fong, a New York City native, finished in 21st place with 577. The 18-year-old was one of three juniors who competed on the USA Shooting team in Beijing.

Once the Women’s 50M final started, all eyes were on China’s Du Li, who equaled an Olympic record 589 to finish the qualification round in first place. Everyone waited to see if she could hold onto her position and overcome the pressure that had plagued her during the 10M Air Rifle competition, where she finished fifth. All questions were quickly put to rest as Du Li went on to shoot a new Olympic Record with her final and win the gold with a strong 2.6 point lead over second place.

While Du Li stayed in command of her first place position throughout the final, the rest of the field was jostling back and forth for the remaining medals. Going into the last shot three shooters were in reach of the silver and bronze, including Beyerle and Katerina Emmons of the Czech Republic, both had shot superb finals to climb into contention from fifth and sixth place. Also in the mix was Eglis Yalma Cruz of Cuba, who entered the final in second place. On the final shot, Du Li nailed a 10.5 to the cheers of her home crowd, Emmons shot a 10.2 to claim silver and Beyerle shot a 8.7 to drop to fifth. This meant that Cuba’s Cruz held onto a medal with a 9.5 on her last shot to earn the bronze. It was a tough break for the 24-year-old Beyerle, who overall had a very strong showing in her first Olympics.

The story was different for Team USA on the shotgun range as Olympic veteran Kim Rhode of El Monte, CA claimed the silver medal in...
Women’s Skeet. This medal was added to Rhode’s gold medal finishes in 1996 and 2004, and a bronze finish in 2000 in Women’s Double Trap, an event that was dropped from the Olympic program after 2004. Rhode’s fourth medal in as many Olympics secures her spot as the most successful female Olympic shooter in U.S. history.

Only Men’s 50M Prone was on the slate for day seven of competition at the Olympic Shooting Hall, and high expectations were placed on Americans Matt Emmons and U.S. Army Major Mike Anti. Emmons of Mount Holly, NJ entered the event as the defending Champion and Anti of Fort Benning, GA was a silver medalist in 50M Three-Position Rifle in Athens, so both had the potential to add to the USA medal count.

In the 60-shot qualification round, it looked as though both Americans might make it into the final after a shaky start, but a nine on his 57th shot dropped Anti out of contention, as he finished ninth overall with a 594. Emmons on the other hand cleaned his last three 10-shot strings to finish with a 597 and enter the final in second place. He went on to shoot an excellent final and pulled within in one point of Ukraine’s Artur Ayyvazian who held on for the gold. Emmons’s silver medal brought the total count for the U.S. history.

Entering the final day of shooting competition, the U.S. Team had already reached its goal of six medals and hopes were very high that they could surpass that goal with strong performances from Matt Emmons and Jason Parker in Men’s 50M Three-Position Rifle. Emmons was returning to this event with a vengeance, after an infamous crossfire on his final shot in 2004 that cost him the gold medal. Parker, traditionally known more for being a strong Air Rifle shooter, had also picked up his 50M Three-Position scores and was considered a possible contender for a medal. But the day looked to belong to Emmons as he finished up the qualification round in second place with an 1175, and Parker finished in 22nd place with an 1164.

Entering the final it seemed the only thing between Emmons and a gold medal was Rajmond Debevec of Slovenia, who only held a one-point lead. On the first shot of the final it seemed that this year it was Debevec’s turn to make the critical mistake as he shot a 7.7 on the first shot to relinquish his lead to Emmons who shot a 9.7. A 7.9 on Debevec’s third shot seemed to knock him out of medal contention completely, as Emmons lead continued to grow as he shot a string of seven 10’s in a row. Going into the last shot of the final, Emmons held a solid 3.3 point lead and for a second time the gold medal seemed locked up for the 27-year-old. This is when fate stepped in again for Matt Emmons, and as the crowd got ready to cheer for the presumed gold medalist, suddenly a 4.4 popped onto the scoreboard. It took a moment for the score to register with the shocked crowd, but soon the realization hit the large contingency of Chinese fans that their shooter, Qiu Jian, had just moved into first place and the Final Hall erupted. Qiu Jian had entered the final in fourth place, but shot the highest final score of the day to position himself for the gold medal. Debevec, who had appeared to knock himself out of a medal with the two early sevens, moved back into third. Emmons finished forth, 1.4 points out of medal contention.

Emmons finish was heart breaking, but like a true champion, he will learn from this experience and move forward. Ultimately all of our 2008 U.S. Olympic Shooting Team members are champions, regardless of their individual finish at the Games. They represented our country and our sport with great character and we should be proud. Becoming an Olympian is a life long process, full of much sacrifice and commitment by both the athlete and their coaches and families. We owe thanks to everyone who made this 2008 USA Olympic Shooting Team one of the most successful ever.
2008 Beijing Olympics
Photo Gallery
2008 Olympian Bios: Jamie Beyerle
Information and Photo Courtesy of USA Shooting

My biggest piece of advice for juniors who have Olympic aspirations:
A true dream is more than just hope. Dreams are something you are willing to make sacrifices for and put as much time and energy as possible into accomplishing them. Be honest with yourself and work as hard as you can. You hold your future in your own hands.

Jamie Beyerle knows a thing or two about championship teams, the University of Alaska-Fairbanks alum was part of three NCAA National Championship teams while a student from 2002-2006. This summer she joined fellow Nanook alum Matt Emmons and the rest of the U.S. Olympic Team as they strived to bring home six medals this summer in Beijing.

The journey to the Olympic Games began for Beyerle when she was only 8 years old through a local BB gun program in her hometown of Lebanon, PA. From there she worked her way into precision competitions and started making a name for herself at the national level in 2000 when she medaled at the Junior Olympic Championship. Her first international medal came the following year when she won the junior gold at the 2001 Championship of the Americas. Since then she has won numerous national and international medals and even earned an Olympic quota slot for the U.S. Team in 2003 with a gold medal finish in the Zagreb World Cup.

Beyerle earned her spot on the Olympic team by winning the U.S. Olympic Three-Position Smallbore Trials with a commanding three-day score of 1959.0, which placed her 21.4 points ahead of second place. The Olympic Trials took place in May at Fort Benning, GA and Beyerle followed up her strong performance with a silver medal at the Milan, Italy World Cup in June. In July she also won the 2008 USA Shooting National Championship in Three-Position Smallbore for the second year in a row. She had a strong showing in Beijing, finishing fourth in Women’s 10M Air Rifle and fifth in Women’s 50M Rifle.

Beyerle is currently a resident athlete at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, CO. Her training and travel schedule keep her very busy, but when she has free time she likes to return to her roots and help coach a local BB gun team.

Congratulations to Jamie Beyerle and the USA Team in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games! For more information on Beyerle or other U.S. National Team Members please visit the USA Shooting website at www.usashooting.com.

2008 Olympian Bios: Sandra Fong
Information Courtesy of USA Shooting

Sandra Fong was the youngest member of the 2008 U.S. Olympic Shooting Team, in fact when she made the Women’s Olympic 50M Rifle team in May she was still a few weeks shy of graduating from high school. Age did not seem to affect the 18-year-old who shot a 1937.6 to edge out her older sister, Abigail, by 10.7 in the three-day aggregate score. The elder Fong finished third at the Olympic Trials and just barely missed the 2008 team. Sandra finished 21st in Women’s 50M Rifle at the Beijing Olympics this summer.

The sisters learned to shoot from their dad as a family activity, now all three are either on the National or Paralympic National Team.

Fong is from New York, NY and will attend Princeton University in the fall where she plans to pursue a career in medicine. In addition to shooting she also competed in track and field, and swimming while in high school. Outside of athletics Fong has a great interest in the performing arts, writing and directing plays, and performing trumpet with her school jazz band.

Congratulations to Sandra Fong and the USA Team in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games! For more information on Fong or other U.S. National Team Members please visit the USA Shooting website at www.usashooting.com.
The CMP is now selling reconditioned Daisy 853 Sporter Air Rifles to promote the development of more new junior shooters. This program can be especially important to new junior programs and summer camps that are seeking to acquire target air rifles suitable for marksmanship at an affordable price. Sales are limited to individuals and programs whose primary intention is to develop new shooters with these rifles. For more information, or to find out if your program is eligible to purchase rifles through this promotional program, please contact Brad Donoho at bdonoho@odcmp.com or 419-635-2141 ext. 1130.

Rifle Description:
Used Daisy 853
Seals Replaced
Chronographed to meet factory velocity requirements.

Includes:
Front and Rear Sights
Sling
Buttplate Spacer

Price: $75 + shipping
Shipping price: $14.95 for one, $22.95 for two
Ready to hit the weight room? This article is dedicated to anaerobic exercise, otherwise known as strength training.

Anaerobic, in simple terms, means “not requiring oxygen.” This does not mean that the body isn’t using oxygen during strength training, but rather implies that the majority of energy used for anaerobic activities comes from energy stores, also known as glycogen, within the muscles. The heart and lungs are still important, but they are a secondary player in strength training. Anaerobic exercise is important for shooters for two major reasons:

1. Well conditioned muscles have more strength and stamina than un-conditioned muscles.
2. It, like aerobic exercise, vastly improves your brain-to-muscle connections, which provide you with the ability to sense minute changes in your body (and consequently, your shooting positions). Simply stated, strength training helps you be more attuned to your body’s position in time and space.

Before we begin on this particular topic, the controversy around strength training for shooters should be addressed. Many people believe that weight lifting adversely affects shooting scores because it adds large quantities of muscle mass and decreases an individual’s flexibility. This is NOT true, especially if the training program is well-tailored to the individual and the needs of that particular athlete. Done correctly, weight training can provide muscle stamina and tone without any “bulking up.” In particular, I like to focus equally on strength exercises that (1) increase muscular endurance and (2) promote balance, coordination, and flexibility.

For the purposes of this article, you will be presented with a basic strength training program. However, down the road you may want to get in touch with a personal trainer who is willing to come to the range, see your sport, listen to your needs, and design a more specific program for you. Most routines will need to be altered on occasion to give your muscles new challenges, and to prevent your progress from stagnating.

The following routine should be done three to four days per week, with at least one full day of rest in between sessions. As with any new fitness program, you may want to start with two sessions per week, and then gradually work your way up to four. Also, if any exercise is painful (like it’s going to cause you an injury) stop the exercise immediately. There is always discomfort with starting or changing your fitness routine, but it’s important to notice the difference between the “burn” and “one more rep and I’m going to dislocate my shoulder”. Please stick to the first type of discomfort. The second usually leads to an afternoon in the ER.

This routine starts with warm-up exercises designed to increase the flexibility and restore balance to your muscles. Do ALL the exercises, and do them in the order and quantity written. One exercise builds on another, so removing one defeats the purpose of doing the workout. Additionally, none of these exercises require weight room equipment. All of them can be done in a small open space such as your living room or an empty corner of the range. Full descriptions of the exercises are given at the end of this article or at http://www.apexcustomengraving.com/shootingworkout. Please note that your first few workouts will be hampered by your need to read the exercise descriptions between all your sets. That is OK! The exercises were named so that you could remember them easily after a few times through.

If you have any questions about this routine, you can e-mail the author at akamber80@yahoo.com; that is, if you’re still able to lift your arms to reach the keyboard after your workout.

Please note that “glutes” are often referred to in this description. Glutes refers to the gluteal muscles, also known as your “bootie,” or “cheeks.”

**WARM UP EXERCISES**

**Kneeling Arm Circles** - Kneeling with arms straight out from sides at shoulder level, thumbs pointing forward and palms down. Keeping arms straight make forward circles with arms. When done with forward circles, turn thumbs to point backwards, palms up and repeat backward circles with arms. (25 each direction)

**Kneeling Pullovers** - Kneeling, straighten arms and interlace fingers with palms facing your body. Keeping arms straight raise arms above head as far as is comfortable then lower them back down toward waist; repeat. (20x)

**Active Shoulder Bridge** - Lie on back with knees bent and feet on the floor. Keep knees and feet at hip width. Squeeze glutes, raising hips and lower back off the floor and then lower down; repeat.) (30x)

**Sitting Floor** - Sit on the floor with your back flat against a wall, legs straight out in front of you and glutes as close to the wall as is comfortable. Pull toes back, flex thighs and press the backs of knees into the floor. (2:00 minutes)

**Shoulder Bridge** - Lay on back with knees bent and feet on the floor, squeeze glutes and press hips and back off floor and hold; concentrate on squeezing glutes and keeping back relaxed. (1:00 minute)

**Active Doorknob Squats** - Stand with feet hip width apart, feet pointing forward and toes 1-2 inches behind door’s edge. Extend arms in front and hold on to a doorknob. Sit back, dropping hips until thighs are parallel with ground while keeping weight in heels and lower back arched. Starting in this position lower hips to the floor and then back up to parallel; repeat up and down. (10x)
**WORKOUT**

**Static Lunges** - Stand with hands behind head, right leg out in front of you and left leg behind. Bend both knees allowing your left leg to drop toward the floor then straighten both legs and rise back up. Repeat then switch legs. (40x)

**Shoulder Bridge** - Lay on back with knees bent and feet on the floor, squeeze glutes to raise hips and back off floor and hold; concentrate on squeezing glutes and keeping back relaxed. (1:00 minute, repeat 3x)

**Elevated Pushups** - Standing roughly one stride from the wall, hands slightly wider than shoulders on the wall, and feet in line with hips. Bend arms lowering chest toward the wall between hands while pinching shoulder blades together and keeping elbows wide. Press back up to starting position. (20x)

**Kneeling Pullovers** - Kneeling, straighten arms and interlace fingers with palms together. Keeping arms straight raise arms above head as far as is comfortable then lower them back down toward waist; repeat. (20x)

**Jumping Jacks** - You know, from elementary school! (10x, repeat 3x)

**Kneeling Arm Circles** - Kneeling with arms straight out from sides at shoulder level, thumbs pointing forward and palms down. Keeping arms straight make forward circles with arms. When done with forward circles, turn thumbs to point backwards, palms up and repeat backward circles with arms. (25x each direction)

**Tricep Bridge** - Lay on back, knees bent and feet on the floor, hands under shoulders, fingers facing toward your feet, squeeze glutes and press hips and back off floor and hold. (1:00 minute, repeat 3x)

**Side Leg Lifts** - Standing and keeping legs straight, slowly lift right leg sideways, keeping body as upright as possible (do not lean to the opposite side). Let leg back down to the floor, then repeat on left side. (20x each side)

**Kneeling Roller Coaster** - On hands and knees, push hips to heels and straighten arms and place palms flat on the floor in front of you. Starting in this position bend elbows rolling over knees, move forward between hands just above floor, drop hips to floor and straighten arms raising chest upward. Lift hips up, return to the starting position and repeat. (10x)

**Kneeling Clock** - Kneel with hips directly over knees, arms relaxed by sides. Part 1: Lift arms out in front to the 12 o’clock position straight overhead, then back down. Part 2: Lift arms halfway between overhead and straight out from sides to 10 and 2 o’clock. Part 3: Lift arms straight out from sides to 9 and 3 o’clock. (20x each part)

**Downward Dog Squats** - On hands and knees. Curl toes under feet and straighten legs by lifting knees off the floor. In this position lower knees to the floor and back up; repeat up and down. (20x, repeat 3x)

**COOL DOWN EXERCISES:**

**Kneeling Clappers** - Kneeling with arms straight in front of chest at shoulder level. While keeping shoulder blades pinched, press the palms of hands together, bring arms as far apart as is comfortable then bring them back together; repeat. (20x)

**Kneeling Pullovers** - Kneeling, straighten arms and interlace fingers with palms facing your body. Keeping arms straight raise arms above head as far as is comfortable then lower them back down toward waist; repeat. (20x)

**Full Squat** - Stand with feet directly under hips and toes pointing forward. Place hands behind head and pinch shoulder blades together. Without letting heels come off the floor, squat down as far as is comfortable and back up; repeat. (10x)

**Static Lunges** - Stand with hands behind head, right leg out in front of you and left leg behind. Bend both knees allowing your left leg to drop toward the floor then straighten both legs and rise back up. Repeat then switch legs. (20x)

**Hand-Leg Opposites** - On hands and knees, raise and straighten right arm and left leg simultaneously until they are both straight and parallel with the floor and hold. Switch position of arms and legs and repeat. (10 total)

**Cats and Dogs** - On hands and knees with hands under shoulders and knees under hips, arch back up and pull chin to chest, then lower back toward floor and raise head up; repeat back and forth.

**Full Squat** - Stand with feet directly under hips and toes pointing forward. Place hands behind head and pinch shoulder blades together. Without letting heels come off the floor, squat down as far as is comfortable and back up; repeat. (10x)

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*Amber Darland, is a Licensed Massage Therapist and Certified Posture Alignment Specialist from Ashmead College in Portland, OR. She is a certified Personal Trainer through the American Council on Exercise, ACE. She is also a graduate of the University of Alaska-Fairbanks with a B.A. in Journalism and Publishing. While attending UAF she was a member of the school’s NCAA Rifle Team, which won four National Championships while she was there. Her other shooting accomplishments include US National Team Member from 2002-2006, US OTC Resident Athlete 2002-2005, World Championship Team Member 2002, National Champion Three-Position Smallbore 2003 and first alternate for the U.S. Olympic Team 2004.*
Whether a junior has aspirations of making the varsity rifle team at their high school or the USA National Development Team, the CMP Three-Position Air Rifle Summer Camps have something to offer everyone who attends. The CMP camp program is focused on helping young shooters develop lifelong skills that will prepare them to be champions on and off the range. A big part of this development is focused around the importance of goal setting. Campers participate in discussions about high school, college and even Olympic goals, which were of particular interest this year as the Olympic Games in Beijing, China took center stage.

Leading the charge in this Olympic themed year was Dan Durben, a 1988 Olympian, 2000 Olympic Rifle Coach and 2004-2008 Paralympic Shooting Coach. This was Durben’s fifth summer serving as the Camp Director. Assisting him were James Hall and Sommer Wood. Hall is a graduate of Jacksonville State University where he was an eight-time All-American on the rifle team. Wood, who served as the Camp Coordinator in addition to Assistant Director, is a graduate of Clemson University where she competed with the school’s club air rifle team.

While the camp directors bring experience to the program, the people that make the camps special are the collegiate athletes who work each summer as counselors. Each year the staff is comprised of shooters from some of the top NCAA programs in the country. Leading the counselor staff in 2008 were four-year camp veterans Natasha Dinsmore of West Virginia University and Katie Harrington from the University of Nebraska. Joining Harrington from Nebraska was first year counselor Christine Costello. Costello was joined by first year counselors Matt MacKenzie and Jonathan Hall of Jacksonville State University, and Ashley Jackson and Sarah Broeker of the University of Kentucky. Also from Kentucky was Jennifer Pason who returned for a second summer as a counselor. Additional second year counselors included Kasey Meyer of Murray State and Keegan Singleton of the University of Memphis whose primary duty was camp equipment technician.

One of the unique features of the camp program is that each summer the program hits the road going to different locations around the country. The 2008 schedule included Kerrville, TX, Rapid City, SD, Camp Perry, OH and Fort Benning, GA. Camp Perry was an exciting new addition to the camp schedule as the Civilian Marksmanship Program opened its brand new 80-point electronic air gun hall. This was one of two new facilities to go online for the CMP this summer, with an 80-point air gun range also opening at CMP South in Anniston, AL. The CMP South range was used for the USA Shooting Junior Olympics in July.
Three-Position Air Rifle
Rule Interpretations

These rule interpretations are based on questions received by the National Three-Position Air Rifle Council Rules Hotline and are answered based on the National Standard Three-Position Air Rifle Rules.

Q: I was reading the rulebook and it didn’t specify that I could not use more than one rifle in a match. I would like to use two rifles, one for standing and kneeling and the second one for prone. Will this be within the parameter of the rules?

A: The current rules do not have an explicit restriction on the number of rifles that one competitor can use in a single match, but the intent of the National Three-Position Air Rifle Council has always been that only one rifle may be used. The intent of Rule 7.16 is that replacing a rifle in a match can only be done in the case of a malfunctioning rifle that cannot readily be repaired.

Not allowing multiple rifles is especially critical in the sporter class where the cost of equipment needed to be competitive is a major issue. If a successful competitor uses two or three rifles to compete, others will want to do the same thing and the perceived cost of equipment needed to be competitive will go up dramatically.

The new rulebook goes into effect on 1 October 2008. The new 2008-2010 National Standard Rules will have an explicit prohibition against using more than one rifle, except in the case of replacing a malfunctioning rifle that cannot be repaired.

If you have a question regarding a rule in the National Standard Three-Position Air Rifle Rules please contact Vicki Donoho on the rules hotline at vdonoho@odcmp.com or 419-635-2141 ext. 1102. The new 2008-2010 National Rules are available for purchase online or the complete book can also be downloaded from the CMP website for free at www.odcmp.com/3P.htm.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The Calendar of Events is featured in every issue of On The Mark. If you would like your match or clinic listed, please contact the CMP at onthemark@odcmp.com, or call 419-635-2141, ext. 1111. Please include the name of the event, date, whom the event is open to and contact information and web site (if available). The CMP will do its best to accommodate each request to be included in the Calendar of Events.

17-18 October 2008
Montgomery Bell Academy Rifle Classic, Nashville, TN

24-26 October 2008
Camp Perry Monthly Air Gun Match (air rifle & air pistol), Camp Perry, OH

8-9 November 2008
GSM Master Instructor Training Course, Anniston, AL

5 December 2008
JROTC Postal Target Postmark deadline, Port Clinton, OH

6 December 2008
CMP Competition Center-South Open House, Anniston, AL

5 January 2009

16-18 January 2009
Camp Perry Open Air Rifle Match, Camp Perry, OH

19 January 2009
Camp Perry Open Air Rifle Match, Camp Perry, OH

12-14 February 2009
Army JROTC Championship, Camp Perry, OH

19-21 February 2009
Marine Corps and Air Force JROTC Championship, Camp Perry, OH

26-28 February 2009
Navy JROTC Championship, Camp Perry, OH

13 July 2009
National Match First Shot Ceremony, Camp Perry, OH

19 July 2009
National Match National Trophy Pistol Matches, Camp Perry, OH

31 July-2 Aug 2009
Rifle SAFS/USMC Junior Highpower Clinic, Camp Perry, OH

3-8 August 2009
National Match National Trophy Rifle/CMP Games Matches, Camp Perry, OH

The new rulebook goes into effect on 1 October 2008. The new 2008-2010 National Standard Rules will have an explicit prohibition against using more than one rifle, except in the case of replacing a malfunctioning rifle that cannot be repaired.

If you have a question regarding a rule in the National Standard Three-Position Air Rifle Rules please contact Vicki Donoho on the rules hotline at vdonoho@odcmp.com or 419-635-2141 ext. 1102. The new 2008-2010 National Rules are available for purchase online or the complete book can also be downloaded from the CMP website for free at www.odcmp.com/3P.htm.
Along with the new venues, there were also new additions to the camp program, most notable was a dedicated equipment technician added to the staff. This role was filled by Keegan Singleton, who served as a counselor in 2007, this year he provided a variety of services including equipment and rifle repair. This was critical for campers whose equipment malfunctioned while at camp, having a technician on hand prevented these campers from missing training time due to a broken rifle. Part of the camp program that was in its second year was the Advanced Standing Camp. This three-day camp was designed as an extension of the three-position camp program and intended for campers who want advanced training in the standing position.

A total of 345 shooters and 127 adult leaders participated in the 2008 CMP Air Rifle Summer Camps. Each of the campers participated in an end of camp match and those scores were compiled to determine EIC points towards the Junior Distinguished Badge. These scores can be found on the CMP website under Air Rifle at, http://clubs.odcmp.com.

Also during each camp a sporter and precision Schützenkönig or “Shooting King” was determined. Each camper took a single shot for the annual commemorative targets, and the closest to the center was crowned the Shooting King. Since 2005 the CMP has used painted commemorative targets to memorialize each summer camp, this is a German shooting tradition that goes back hundreds of years. Camp participants take one shot on a paper target that is then attached to the commemorative target. This year the tradition took a different spin adding the German tradition of the Schützenkönig. Only the top shots from each camp will be placed on the commemorative targets and all the other shots will go on a plaque that will be displayed along with the targets at CMP’s new range at Camp Perry.

With the Olympics, the new ranges and new additions to the camps, 2008 was an exciting year for the CMP Summer Air Rifle Camp program. Thanks to all the staff, campers and coaches who made each camp a success. The 2009 summer camp schedule will be posted on the CMP homepage in early January.

### Junior Distinguished Badge Program

The National Three-Position Air Rifle Council established the Junior Excellence-In-Competition Award Program to provide incentives for junior three-position air rifle competitors to improve and excel. This program awards prestigious badges of distinction to the most outstanding junior shooters.

Junior shooters earn EIC credit points by placing in designated competitions in accordance with the requirements of this program. The Junior Distinguished Badge is awarded to school-age junior three-position air rifle shooters who attain a series of high rankings in designated major junior air rifle championships that include the State Junior Olympic Qualifiers, CMP Cup Matches, National Junior Olympic Championships and other National Council Three-Position Air Rifle Championships.

Congratulations to the juniors listed here who recently earned their Junior Distinguished Badges. **ON THE MARK** will recognize all juniors who achieve this outstanding goal in each upcoming issue. A complete list of juniors who have earned their Junior Distinguished Badge is at [http://www.odcmp.com/3P/EIC.pdf](http://www.odcmp.com/3P/EIC.pdf). If you would like more information on this program, visit the CMP web site at [http://www.odcmp.com/3P/EICProgram.pdf](http://www.odcmp.com/3P/EICProgram.pdf) or email CMP Competitions at 3PAR@odcmp.com.

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<td>Winton Fayett Dorian</td>
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As the Opening Ceremonies of the 29th Olympiad got under way, it did not take long to recognize that the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing were going to be something special. All Olympics are special in their own right, a time for the world to come together and celebrate a common bond through athletics. But as the last of the 14,000 performers wrapped up the 2008 Opening Ceremony, it was obvious that China was ready to take the Olympic Games to a whole new level.

In all, China provided 31 venues including the famed Birds Nest, spent over 40 billion (U.S. dollars) in preparation for the Games and had over one million volunteers across the country to insure that everything ran smoothly. 205 countries participated, which was impressive for an Olympics held in a Communist country plagued with human rights issues. It was truly a chance for China to turn a new page on the world front and show a much different view from the images of Tiananmen Square in 1989.

It can even be argued that as much as the Olympics were elevated by China; modern China benefited the most by hosting the Olympics. Pollution was significantly cut in Beijing leading up the events as new public transportation measures were put in place, and it was announced by the Chinese government that many of these changes will remain, in the countries first real long term effort to cut pollution levels. Also, the world press was allowed to broadcast live streaming footage of the Games, which was a significant loosening of governmental controls on the media. Not to mention the interaction of thousands of people from across the world with the Chinese, allowing a massive exchange of ideas from different cultures. The long-term effect of this world exposure on the People’s Republic of China is yet to be seen, but it is hard to imagine that the exposure will not continue to have a positive impact on the country.

But let us not forget that this is a culture that is much older than the People’s Republic of China that we know today. The Communist Party did not take control of China until 1921, but Chinese culture has existed for over 4,000 years, making the current government only a small blip in the country’s overall history. The longevity of this culture is almost hard to imagine as an American, so lets look at China and the United States by the numbers.

First, China has a population of 1.3 billion; the USA has 300 million, that is 1 billion less people than China! Even more surprising is that the U.S has a greater landmass than China by 12.4 thousand square miles. This means that over 1.3 billion people live in a country smaller than the United States. Beijing alone has 17 million people, twice the number of residents living in New York City. Parts of The Great Wall of China are over 2000 years old while the United States of America is only 232 years old.

Looking at these numbers, it should not be a surprise that China put on such an impressive Olympics. They had centuries of culture to draw upon and the sheer numbers of people to ensure that an event of this magnitude was a success. There is still progress to be made in China, poverty and other social issues to overcome. But the people that I met there exhibited strong national pride and a drive to push their country onto the modern global stage, much of this progress triggered by the Beijing Games. This shows that the Olympics are much more than a mere sporting event, they are a catalyst for change and they represent the universal hope for a better world.
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