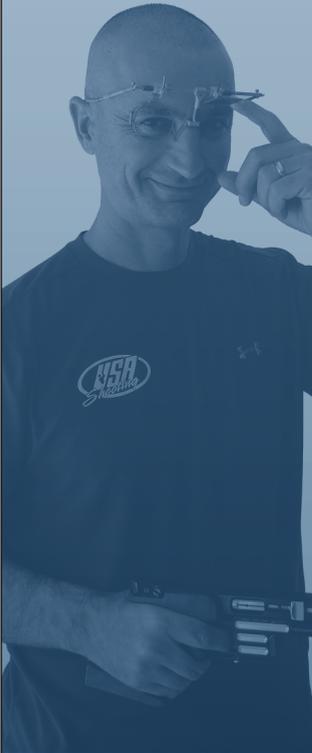




MAKING THE TEAM

Summer 2012



Making the Team: The Path to Olympic & Paralympic Glory

For many athletes the Olympic Games are an ideal. We see it on television. We read about it in the papers. We idolize its heroes. But that is where it often ends.

In the sport of shooting, making the jump from firearm safety to an Olympic hopeful may seem like a long shot, but as the National Governing Body for the Olympic sport of shooting, it is USA Shooting's mission to share the sport with interested individuals and groups throughout the U.S.

From becoming a member of USA Shooting to honing your shooting skills to a specific discipline, the sport can be an incredibly rewarding experience. Below is a brief explanation of the steps required to make the U.S. Olympic Team.

★ Shoot in a preliminary tryout (PTO) sponsored by USA Shooting, and fire a minimum score that has been established in each event. Only members can participate and access the regional event listing for the PTO nearest them.

★ Participate in the USA Shooting National Championships (USASNC), which is the first step for selection to either the National Team (NT) or National Development Team (NDT). Additionally, there are at least two team selection matches each year held in the spring and fall. The USASNC can also be used as a team selection match.



★ Once a shooter is named to the National Team, he/she must still qualify to serve on international squads that travel around the world. Beyond the World Cup and World Cup Finals, there are many international matches that run on a four-year sequence beginning the season following the Olympic Games.

So what are you waiting for? Now that you know what to do, start shooting! One day you may be the next Olympic idol, standing on the podium of the world's biggest stage.

The following page lays out five oversimplified steps to getting active in the shooting sports. Remember, you should contact a club or shooting range near you for more extensive details.



TWO-TIME OLYMPIAN JAMIE (BEYERLE) GRAY CELEBRATES HER 2011 ISSF WORLD CUP FINAL WIN. SUCCESS AT AN INTERNATIONAL LEVEL STAMPED GRAY'S TICKET TO LONDON VIA THE POINT SYSTEM.

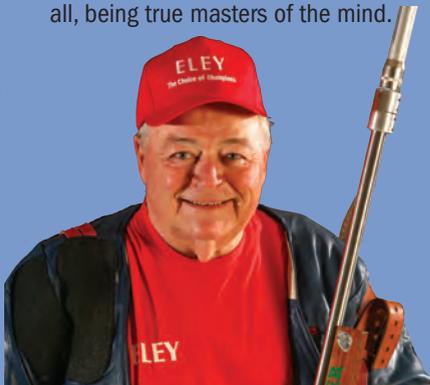
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Gray, who missed the 2008 Olympic Games podium by less than two points, is ready for a rematch.

Photo ISSF

What Makes a Champion Shooter – Excerpt from Lones Wigger, five-time Olympian

Shooting is a unique sport because it doesn't require exceptional strength, size, athletic or natural ability to become a champion. The learned attributes are much more important than the God-given ones. Champion shooters consist of both sexes, come in all sizes and from all walks of life. There are, however, certain elements which contribute to the development of a shooting champion. Although these qualities may vary from individual to individual, the most important factors include: above average intelligence; learning to shoot at an early age; complete dedication to the sport with definite goals and plans; an environment which provides the opportunity for an individual to train, learn, progress and achieve goals; the development and training of the mental aspects; and the most important attribute for competitiveness—a desire and determination to become the best.

A shooting champion gains little notoriety and receives very little in material value or compensation. Usually, competitive shooting costs much more than any possible gain. For the true champion shooters, the compensation is the personal satisfaction of winning, knowing they have bested the best and perhaps the most important aspect of all, being true masters of the mind.



2008 OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST VINCENT HANCOCK SEALS HIS SECOND OLYMPIC BERTH AT THE TUCSON TRAP & SKEET CLUB.

Photo Zuma Press

★ Find a shooting club near you or take a shooting class to learn about safety and how to shoot. At the beginning levels, USA Shooting, the National Rifle Association (NRA), the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP), the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), the Amateur Trapshooting Association (ATA), National Skeet Shooting Association (NSSA), 4-H and Boy Scouts offer programs that will provide the initial training and guidance to begin the process. The advanced stages of the sport come under the purview of USA Shooting in the Junior Olympic, National Development Team and National Team programs offered. Take the time to visit one of the many sanctioned USA Shooting Member Clubs across the country.

★ Join USA Shooting to become eligible to compete in sanctioned USA Shooting matches. Youth and adults alike can shoot in sanctioned matches for their respective shooting category by registering online for competitions through the membership web site.

★ Practice, practice, practice and stick with it. Many people start a sport, but do not commit to it. As you continue to practice you will continue to see improvement. Just remember, it takes time to learn your best techniques and your favorite equipment. Take part in shooting clinics. There are often local clinics around the country offered through various organizations, such as the First Shots seminars hosted by the NSSF. Seek them out in your area to continue your learning. College-aged shooters can become eligible for university shooting programs and could earn education scholarships.

★ Once you become acquainted with the sport of shooting take the next step and get involved. Compete. Shoot in local, regional or even national contests. You can access sanctioned USA Shooting matches online or see the up to the minute competition schedules under the membership database and register online.

Shooting Tip from two- time Olympic medalist in rifle Matt Emmons

Fundamentals: Natural point of aim, sight alignment, trigger control, and follow through. These are the absolute basics of shooting. The funny part is, these four things are so easily overlooked by juniors and experienced shooters alike. Focus on these fundamentals and perfect them. Your work will be rewarded, especially when it matters. In stressful situations, poor shots are most often caused by making a mistake with one or more of these fundamentals. Being extremely competent in these areas will help you make good shots in all situations.



Photo Tom Kinnell



Photo ISSF

★ To earn a place on the U.S. National, National Development or Junior Olympic Team in rifle, pistol or shotgun, athletes must take part in specific team eligibility events. These include competitions like selection matches, National Championships and Junior Olympics. Earning your place on the U.S. Team could make you eligible to represent the United States in National or International competition. It is through participation on a USA Shooting national team that athletes secure their place on the U.S. Olympic Shooting Team. It takes many years and active involvement with USA Shooting to be named to an Olympic Team, but the experience is one of a kind.

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