



Board of Directors

April 4, 2021

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2021 ACUI National Collegiate Shotgun Championships

San Antonio, Texas | March 25-27, 2021

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HBSF's Mike Higgins and Melinda Branchini attended last month's ACUI Collegiate Nationals in San Antonio, which was conducted on a reduced scale due to the COVID-19 pandemic (the 2020 event was not held).

Directors

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Roughly 550 competitors attended vs. the 1,000 of two years ago. No sponsors, vendors, parents, or friends were allowed on the grounds; only competitors and coaches were permitted inside the venue.

Executive Director

Melinda Branchini

Four events were held over three days: American Trap, American Skeet, Sporting Clay, Super Sporting (no International or Five Stand). Teams were allowed on the grounds to shoot their events, then asked to leave. There was none of the usual atmosphere with tents, cookouts, campers, and mingling between teams. It was very antiseptic, quick, and to the point.

Advisory Committee

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All competitors had to bring proof of a negative COVID test. Each was given a wrist band reflecting them being "safe" and all had their temperatures taken on arrival.

That said, the ACUI must be given credit for making the event happen at all. There was pressure from various quarters to cancel again this year, which would have been devastating for the competitors and the various university programs. All the collegiate athletes in attendance seemed to understand the need for the restrictions and were making the best of the situation. Everyone we spoke to was very happy to be at the "big show" this year after missing last year.

Happily, we (HBSF) were allowed brief access to the grounds to meet with our grant recipients in the competition. Out of 500+ competitors, HBSF grant recipients represented themselves very well. In fact, of the seventeen grantees for 2021, ten were in attendance at the Nationals. These included: Alex Rudd and Jeff Wanner of Mount Marty University in South Dakota (last year's recipient from Mount Marty, Nathan List was also competing); Colton Back and Ryland Downs from Schreiner University;

Christina Byrd and Ryan Loveless from Lindenwood; Joseph Wischerath, Laurence Peterson, Nicholas Godfrey and Will Van Dusen from the University of Texas.

Several HBSF shooters finished with outstanding placings at this year's Nationals...

American Skeet (Men's)

- Will Van Dusen (UT) 10th
- Ryan Loveless (Lindenwood) 16th
- Nick Godfrey (UT) 22nd

Super Sporting (Men's)

- Will Van Dusen (UT) 12th

Sporting Clay (Men's)

- Will Van Dusen (UT) 18th

American Skeet (Women's)

- Maddy Bernau (Martin Methodist) 24th

American Trap (Women's)

- Maddy Bernau (Martin Methodist) 15th

Super Sporting (Women's)

- Maddy Bernau (Martin Methodist) 8th
- Monica Dale (Concordia) 9th

Sporting Clay (Women's)

- Monica Dale (Concordia) 8th

Maddy Bernau is also a member of the current US Olympic Shotgun Team and will be competing in Tokyo this summer. Will Van Dusen had been a competitor/grant recipient at Texas A&M, but upon finishing his undergrad, transferred to UT for his graduate work.

We were sought out by Courtney Meinhardt of Drury University in Missouri, who received a grant last year. She was very grateful for her prior grant and while we were talking with her current coach, she came up to thank us.

We also had the opportunity to meet with Dr. John Taylor the CEO of ACUI as well as Shawn Dulohery the Director of Shooting Programs.

Finally, we connected with coaches from Doane, Drury, Lindenwood and the University of Texas. All indicated they will have applicants coming to the Foundation in 2022.

It's worth noting that other HBSF grant recipients not attending this year's Nationals participated the week prior in the Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) in Ohio. In many cases, Universities would not allow their teams to travel over a certain distance due to the pandemic. All our grantees, competing in either event, are worthy of congratulations for their hard work and dedication during a most difficult two-year period.

Each of the student athletes we met at the event were appreciative of our support and very excited to be at the Nationals. Everyone is looking forward to 2022 when (we assume) the event will be back to normal.

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