

For Immediate Release
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USA Shooting Sends Strong Team, Brings Home Several Quota Spots from Championships of the Americas

SALINAS, Puerto Rico – USA Shooting sent a team of 31 shooter-athletes to Salinas, Puerto Rico for the IX Championships of the Americas (CAT) Games held Nov. 1-11.

Originally, USA Shooting was planning on using the CAT Games to develop its younger or more inexperienced team members for international competition, but after the International Shooting Sports Federation (ISSF) allocated 13 Olympic country quota places to be distributed at CAT, USAS felt it was necessary to meet this opportunity along with continuing the initial goal of developing its younger athletes.

In turn, USAS amended its team, allowing already-named CAT team members to retain their position, and adding one additional athlete to the team in the events that have a quota opportunity. USA Shooting, along with its Executive Committee, felt this amendment met the requirement of maximizing the quota opportunity presented by the CAT match.

And that decision indeed proved a smart one, as the U.S. Shooting Team secured all but two of the quota's that were available to them in Puerto Rico. In the end, the U.S. Shooting Team came home with nine country quota spots and a total of 19 medals from these continental championships.

2004 Olympian and Olympic Training Center resident athlete, Emily Caruso was the first U.S. victor at the IX Championships of the Americas (CAT Games), in Salinas, Puerto Rico, winning a gold medal and country quota spot, on Nov. 3, in women's air rifle.

Caruso clinched the top spot on the podium with a 499.2 (397 + 102.2) total score. She finished just above her teammate 16-year-old Shasta Little (Redmond, Ore.), who walked away with the silver medal and a 493.3 (391 + 102.3) total score. Mexico's Martha De Luna finished with the bronze, just two-tenths of a point below Little.

Two-time Olympian Sgt. First Class Daryl Szarenski secured the U.S. its second Olympic country quota spot, finishing first in men's 50m free pistol. Szarenski, of the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit, finished with a total score of 641 (538 + 93).

Sgt. Keith Sanderson, also of the USAMU, placed third in men's free pistol, shooting a 638.4 (538 + 92.4) total score. Staff Sgt. Thomas Rose (USAMU) finished just short of the medal stand, placing fourth with a 636.5 (536 + 92.5).

In men's air pistol, however, Rose finished on top, placing first with a score of 680.5 and securing the U.S. a country quota spot. Rose had to shoot a personal best of 581 just to get into the final. He then hit a string of seven 10's in a row, in the final, finishing on top

and winning his first international medal for the U.S. Shooting Team. Szarenski finished fourth in men's air, with a total score of 675.2.

In women's sport pistol, Libby Callahan (Upper Marlboro, Md.) walked away with the win and Olympic Quota, shooting a 568 qualifying score and a 202.6 final. She finished over nine points above the next competitor, Brazil's Rachel Silveira.

In men's trap, three-time Olympian Bret Erickson ran away with the competition. Erickson led by two points going into the final round with a 73. In the final, Erickson shot a 22 to finish with a 141, the gold, and a country quota spot. Seth Inman (Lexington, Mo.) finished fifth overall, with a score of 133.

And, in women's trap, Emma Simpson (Hartsfield, Ga.) Amanda Dorman (Colorado Springs, Colo.) and Canadian shooter Sandra Honour found themselves all tied for first after the final, with a total score of 78. After a battle in the shoot-off, Honour took the gold, while Dorman and Simpson finished second and third, respectively. Collyn Loper (Birmingham, Ala.) entered the final with a three point lead on her competitors, but shot a 14 and placed in fourth.

In men's 50m prone rifle, Johannes Sauer, of Canada, walked away with the gold, shooting a 691.2 total score. The USA's Joe Hein (Colorado Springs, Colo.) finished just two-tenths of a point short of the Canadian, shooting a 691 (589 +102) total score for the silver medal. Jason Dardas (Essexville, Mich.) placed fifth for the U.S. with a 689.2 total score, while Jonathan Hall finished eighth with a 687.3.

Jason Dardas was able to finish first in the men's 50m three-position event for the U.S. Team, however, securing another country quota spot for the 2008 Olympic Games. Dardas made a huge run in the final, after finishing 10 points below that of qualifying leader, Joseph Hein. Hein entered the final in the lead with 1,159, but could only get one 10 shot off in the final, finishing in second with a 1,244.7 total score. Dardas, on the other hand, shot a 97.6 in the final to finish first with a 1,246.6 and the gold. The other U.S. shooter in this event, Joseph Hall, finished in seventh with a 1,239.8 total score.

Nineteen-year-old Kimberly Chrostowski (Rockville, RI) won her first international medal for the U.S. at the CAT Games, in women's 50m three-position rifle. Chrostowski finished with a 577 qualifying score to enter the final with a three-point lead. 2004 Olympian in this event, Sarah Blakeslee (Colorado Springs, Colo.) entered the final with a 574, but came back in the final to give Chrostowski a run for her money. In the end, however, Chrostowski was able to hold on to that top spot, while Blakeslee finished in second. Taylor Beard, also of Colorado Springs, Colo., ended up in fourth after qualifying with a 562.

On Monday, Nov. 7, Rebecca Snyder (Colorado Springs, Colo.) battled her way to the top of the awards podium in the women's air pistol event. Snyder finished with a 379 qualifying score, three points below the leader, El Salvador's Luisa Maida. But after

shooting a 96.3 in the final, Snyder found herself in a tie for the top spot. Snyder finished with a 10.7, just one-tenth of a point above Maida's shot of 10.6, but good enough for the gold medal and the Olympic country quota spot.

Also on Monday, Pfc. Josh Richmond, of the Army Marksmanship Unit, dominated the field of men's double trap shooters at the CAT Games, shooting a 136 qualifying and a 47 in the final to finish eight points above the next highest finisher. Richmond won the gold, for the U.S., but not the country quota, due to the fact that none were offered. Matt Drexler was the next highest U.S. finisher, shooting a 121 qualifying and placing eighth.

And in men's air rifle, the U.S. Shooting Team was represented in the finals by brothers Joseph and Jonathan Hall. Joseph qualified with a 589, just three points below the leader, Mexico's Roberto Elias, while Jonathan qualified with a 587, and was tied for seventh. In the end, Joseph finished fourth with a 689.9, and Jonathan finished fifth with a 689.7.

Haley Dunn (Eddyville, Iowa) ran away with the women's skeet event, on Wednesday. Dunn finished with a score of 67 out of 75 for a four-point lead going into the finals and finished with a 90 overall. Argentina's Melisa Gil finished with silver and an 85 total score, while the USA's Emily Blount (Tucson, Ariz.) took third with a 79.

Vincent Hancock (Eatonton, Ga.) finished first in men's skeet, as well. Hancock finished with a 146 total score, shooting a 121 qualifying score and a 25 in the final for the gold. Hancock has already won the U.S. a quota spot in this event, though, when he finished first at the World Cup Korea.

For more information on the CAT Games and to view the full results, as they come available, log on to www.issf-shooting.org.