

Congratulations to our Air Rifle team and to our Air Pistol girls for their excellent performance at the 4H National Shooting Sports 2017 Championships held in Grand Island, NE June 27th thru June 29th.

Our North Dakota Air Rifle Team earned first in 3-Position on day 1, 4th in the 40 shot standing match on day 2 and first place in Silhouettes on day 3. Their team aggregate over all 3 matches earned them **First Place Overall in the 26 team competition.**

Jacob Vaagen, Christopher Morstad, Maria Rosa-Nieves and Brandon Alexander each contributed to our first place finish, and they should all be very proud of this accomplishment in head to head competition with all of the other state teams from across the United States. For the 3-position match, our team score was built by Maria, Brandon and Jacob as the top 3 finishers in our team. For the 40 shot standing match and in the silhouette match, our team score was built by Brandon, Maria, and Christopher. This team championship is also a credit to the quality of our Ramsey County's 4H Shooting Sports Program in partnership with our Lake Region Shooting Sports Association.

Of the 95 individuals from across the United States who fired these air rifle matches, Maria took first place in the 3P match and also in the 40 shot standing match. She had to work hard in order to preserve her first place rank in thrilling finals competition. After the main match the top 8 competitors from the main match fire another 10 shots from the standing position to determine the winner in each of the 3-position and the 40 shot standing matches. These 10 extra shots are added to the 8 competitor's main match scores. So, the final ranking of these top 8 shooters is determined in front of a cheering crowd one shot at a time. Maria was able to preserve her first place finish over Brandon with a 636 against his 635.6 on day 1 to win the 3-position match. On day 2, her 452.2 barely edged A. Dawson Kissik from Alabama who fired a 452.1 for second place. That is right, the winner on day 1 was determined by 4 tenths of a point and on day 2 it was determined by 1 tenth of a point. As you can clearly see, these matches on the first two days were extremely tough competition.

Then, Brandon stepped up and fired an outstanding match on day 3 in the Silhouette competition with a high score of 32 out of 40 to win that event by a wide margin over the other 94 competitors.

Overall, Brandon earned first place in the aggregate of the three matches, and **Brandon is the 4H Air Rifle Individual National Champion for 2017.**

Maria earned 7th place overall. While she did ok in the Silhouette match, her score in this match was not high enough to keep her at the top of the heap. Her performance to win the first two events was outstanding. It is tough to fire 3 outstanding matches in a row.

Hannah Morstad and Addisyn Meyer fired very competitive scores in all three of their air pistol events. There were 16 teams (most teams were comprised of 4 and their 3 highest individual scores in each event determined their team score just as it did in air rifle). Of course, Hannah and Addisyn could post only 2 scores for their team aggregate. Still, on day one, Hannah fired a 277, and Addisyn fired a 244 to earn 14th place out of the 16 teams entered.

On day 2, for the silhouette match consisting of 40 shots from the standing position, Hannah fired a 22 and Addisyn a 19. This earned them 14th place again out of the 16 teams in the competition.

On day 3, for the 40 shot standing match, Hannah fired a 336 and Addisyn a 313 which was just good enough for 15th place in the team competition. If this 40 shot standing team competition would have been made of the best 2 scores out of a team of 4, Hannah and Addisyn would have placed 6th in the 16 teams that fired the match. Clearly, they performed very well. Had they been able to team up with even one other team member, they would have been very competitive in the team events.

At the end of the three days, Hannah earned 23rd place overall and Addisyn 33rd place overall among the 57 competitors who fired the matches.

Our Ramsey County 4H Shotgun team of Dylan Durbin, Bryer Erickson, Spencer Frith, and Mason Hanson also represented North Dakota at the 4H Nationals. They fired the sporting clays match on the first day, and Dylan Durbin earned 6th place of the 116 individual competitors while the team score was good for 7th of the 28 teams.

On Day 2, they competed in the Skeet match where they were unable to break into the top 10 individually, but they were successful as a team to earn 8th place in Skeet.

On Day 3, they shot Trap where their team placed 9th.

Their overall aggregate of the 3 matches placed them 5th among the 28 teams. This is a great accomplishment in this National competition. Many of the state shotgun teams are comprised of the top 4 individuals out of 10,000 or more young people who compete in their state 4H championships to earn their way to the 4H Nationals each year.