Coach Spotlight ~ Rod Savely

This issue’s coaches spotlight is going to Rod Savely. Rod was given a quick over the phone interview and asked several questions about his career as a coach in 4-H shooting sports for the state of Oklahoma.

Rod started his career in 4-H when he and his family moved to Woodward, Oklahoma in the year 2002. “It wasn’t long before my son made some new friends around the neighborhood. He was young and at the age of nine years old at the time, when one of the neighborhood girls was introducing him to the fascinating world of 4-H. I thought it would be good for him to get involved in a family friendly activity, especially at his young critical age. Little did I know that was going to be opening a door of terrific opportunity for me, as well as my son.”

Why did he become a coach? The reason is simple. “I wanted to get more involved in the sport, it wasn’t just fun for the kids, it was a learning experience for the participants and parents as much as it was for the kids. I noticed that the program in my county needed more coaches, and I felt the need to help out. I wanted to be more than just a person helping out with his kid’s sport, I wanted to be a volunteer with the passion to not only help these kids grow in the program and improve their skills, but to also get others involved in the 4-H community as well. So, the best way I thought to do this was to step up and earn my coach’s certification.”

What are some of the best experiences he’s had in 4-H shooting sports? “They have all been wonderful experiences to me. I enjoy working with the kids and parents, helping out with the volunteers and other coaches. I have always enjoyed the state and national competitions, always an enjoyable atmosphere for anyone who attends. I believe the one experience that stands out the most to me, is the time I was allowed to coach the national muzzleloader team. Our team did very well in representing the state of Oklahoma, and we all had fun doing it. That is most likely my most memorable experience in 4-H.”

Additional comments. “I, personally would like to see more parents getting involved in the family of 4-H shooting sports, its always nice to see new faces and people helping out to keep the program running. Without the volunteers our program would really struggle to carry on, and keep kids in an active family friendly sport. I would really like to thank all the volunteers that we currently have, as well as the extension educators and coordinators, as we couldn’t have this enjoyable program without them. I have enjoyed all the years I have spent in this program, way back to when my son was a nine-year-old just starting out. Even though he has aged out, I still continue coaching, and the reason for it is simple. I am glad to see that the kids have a lot of success in the sport, even if they don’t recognize it right away. To think how far these Boys and Girls have come, and how far they are going to reach through their career in 4-H is something I look forward to.”

Written by Marissa Bensch
An Inside Look at Hunting Skills by Zachary League

4-H Shooting Sports is one of the most diverse project areas in this fantastic program. We have the opportunity to compete in disciplines from Air Rifle to Archery and anything in between. The Hunting Skills contest is one of our competitions that doesn’t get a lot of time in the spotlight, which is, in my opinion, totally unjustified. There isn’t a single contest in the shooting sports program as diverse and varied as the Hunting Skills contest. In no other discipline can a competitor compete through a 3-D archery course one hour and identify pelts and skulls in the next hour. The events included in the hunting skills contest include a hunting skills test, wildlife identification, shotgun, archery, muzzleloader, small-bore rifle, orienteering and a hunting trail.

Contestants show up early to register at the front desk and sit down to catch up with friends from across the area. At the specified time, the competitors either place themselves into groups or are grouped by the coordinator. The groups have a specific rotation through the events, and generally complete the indoor events- wildlife identification, hunting skills test, and muzzleloader test- first. After the indoor events, contestants report to their assigned shooting range.

The archery event consists of around 10 3D targets at various ranges, usually ranging from 5 to 40 yards in distance. Before the course is began, participants have the option to take several sighting shots to determine if their equipment is still in working order. After everyone is ready in the group, everyone heads down the trail. Rangefinders are not allowed on the course, so any and all distances must be judged by the competitor. Shooters take turns releasing arrows at the targets, then retrieve arrows and score targets as everyone finishes the course. After all targets have been scored, competitors check their scores and then move onto the next station.

The shotgun course is usually the equivalent of a five-stand course. Competitors will fire at 20 clay targets during the course of fire, which come from a combination of different throwers. Participants have the option to use their own firearm or a provided firearm.

The muzzleloader and small-bore rifle events are both very similar. Participants have the option to use their own firearm or one provided. In the small-bore rifle contest, participants shoot 30 shots at either metal silhouettes or paper targets- 10 each in standing, kneeling, and prone.

The Orienteering and Hunter Safety Trail event are the trickiest in this contest. Orienteering requires knowledge of maps and navigation, with a test over quadrangle maps and a practical navigation test. The Hunter Safety Trail requires competitors to know the hunting regulations inside and out with questions and scenarios often encountered while hunting.

While every contest within 4-H shooting sports requires a vast amount of practice and dedication, Hunting Skills definitely has a level of effort required paralleling or exceeding that of other contests. No other event requires a diverse skill set or intense knowledge of areas of study outside of standard marksmanship.
On a hot and very sunny August 19th, Oklahoma 4-H archers competed at the Payne County Fairgrounds in the Oklahoma State Outdoor Sr Archery and Jr & Int Fun Shoot. This contest served as the qualifier for the team going to nationals in both compound and recurve.

The 3D course served as a challenging yet fun test for all skill levels including 15 targets for seniors and 10 targets for juniors and intermediates. This portion of the contest is always a favorite for most of the participants. The field round was moved to a new location this year and was laid out in an arrangement juniors, intermediates and seniors could all enjoy and parents could watch. The FITA round while always challenging seemed a bit easier without the added inconvenience of our well known Oklahoma wind. Wind flags were provided but not used much in this years contest.

Thank you to all of the coaches, parents and volunteers who stepped up and helped make this event a success! A special thanks to Rusty Peterson, Danielle Venable, Lindell Newman, Blaise Neman, Tah Moorman, Kyle Ridley, Billy Bullard, Carl Hamby, and Terry Nelson for serving as range safety.

**Shotgun**

The shotgun discipline state contests were held on 3 separate dates in the fall of 2017. These contests also served as qualifier for those vying for the team attending nationals in June. Competitors must finish in the top 4 after all 3 events to make the team. Overall awards were presented to the top 3 competitors in each category.

Sporting clays started off the shotgun circuit on August 26, 2017 at Quail Ridge Sporting Clays in Mcloud, Oklahoma. 120 participants enjoyed a day on the range including juniors, intermediates and seniors. The course included both green and orange domes this year on a very challenging course. Only range personnel, volunteers, coaches and competitors are allowed on this range due to safety. Competitors traverse the course with their group completing 12 stations with 4-6 shots taken at each. The course is set by range management as well as the tie breakers. Several ties had to be broken prior to the award ceremony. This contest also serves as the tie breaker event for the overall and national team selection. Thank you to all the coaches, volunteers and range officers who made this contest possible.

The skeet contest was held on September 23, 2017 at the Oklahoma City Gun Club. It turned out to be a great day to be outside and enjoy a day on the range. Several counties and competitors attended this event for the first time this year and were very successful. 5 shotgun ranges were is use all day as 33 squads competed at this years event. Thank you to Oklahoma County 4-H for serving lunch and hosting this event.

On October 21, 2017 the trap contest was held at the Oklahoma Trap and Skeet Association Park in El Reno. This event successfully accommodated 78 squads competing using 10 houses. Competitors enjoyed time visiting with teammates and participants from all over Oklahoma. This event was the culmination of the season and overall winners and the national team were announced at the award ceremony. A special thanks to all the volunteers who made these events possible.
.22 Rifle
Sr Division
1st~ Marissa Bensch, Payne County
2nd~ Shanell Boatman, Payne County
3rd~ Clay Laughlin, Bryan County

Int Division
1st~ Madison Goeppinger, Wagoner County
2nd~ Brayden Bensch, Payne County
3rd~ Carson Atwood, McIntosh County

.22 Pistol
1st~ Marissa Bensch, Payne County
2nd~ Alex Parker, McIntosh County
3rd~ Donivin Horton, Wagoner County

Outdoor Archery
Sr Compound Division
1st~ Morgan Sennett, Pittsburgh County
2nd~ Clay Laughlin, Bryan County
3rd~ Konner Ingersoll, Pottawatomie County

Sr Recurve Archery
1st~ Logan Stephens, Adair County
2nd~ Joseph Zinn, Logan County
3rd~ Beth Bollinger, McClain County

Hunting Skills
Sr Division
1st~ Clay Laughlin, Bryan County
2nd~ Marissa Bensch, Payne County
3rd~ Zachary League, Texas County

Int Division
1st~ Aiden Cason, Canadian County
2nd~ Brayden Bensch, Payne County

Shotgun Overall
Sr Division
1st~ Nathan Beagle, Pawnee County
2nd~ Shane Wilson, Love County
3rd~ Corey McGregor, McClain County

Air Rifle
Sr Division
1st~ Marissa Bensch, Payne County
2nd~ Zachary League, Texas County
3rd~ Abigail Nunn, Murray County

Int Division
1st~ Logan Keenan, Murray County
2nd~ Cody Boatman, Payne County
3rd~ Dalton Nichols, Major County

Jr Division
1st~ Dalton Heflay, Murray County
2nd~ Weston Sumner, Payne County
3rd~ Abbey Thompson, Murray County

Muzzleloader
1st~ Marissa Bensch, Payne County
2nd~ Ashley Hayes, Pontotoc County
3rd~ Abigail Nunn, Murray County

Air Pistol
Sr Division
1st~ Marissa Bensch, Payne County
2nd~ Madison Goeppinger, Wagoner County
3rd~ Tyler Goeppinger, Wagoner County

Int Division
1st~ Dalton Nichols, Major County
2nd~ Phillip Berry, Dewey County
3rd~ Cody Boatman, Payne County
The muzzleloader contest was held at the Oklahoma City Gun Club on November 11, 2017. Most people who have shot muzzleloader before, know that it can be anyone’s game. The weather was slightly drizzly and chilly throughout the day. Ten 4-H participants from all around the state, competed for a chance to showcase their muzzleloading skills and qualify for the National 4-H Shooting Sports Championships. Participants arrived early that morning for a routine firearms check in, and mandatory range safety briefing, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and 4-H Pledge led by Zachary League and Marissa Bensch. The competition started with an open volley. Due to the drizzle in the air, it became increasingly difficult during the day to keep the powder dry and everything on schedule, but the participants handled everything with finesse and refinement showing how well they understood their training and could implement procedures correctly.

Participants had a new learning experience including a few equipment malfunctions. Everyone had a lot of fun and the day concluded with a group photo and the muzzleloader song. A special thanks to Lindell Newman, JJ Jones, Michael Bensch, Christal Bensch and Terry Nelson for serving as range safety officers and scorers. For more information about muzzleloading, contact your County Extension Office or State Coordinator Terry Nelson.

Firelake Arena in Shawnee, Oklahoma served as the host site for the 2018 State Air Rifle and Air Pistol Contest. The weather outside was slightly chilly, but luckily air rifle and air pistol contests are held indoors. Shortly after check-in and the morning safety briefing and a group picture, along with several cups of coffee for the coaches and volunteers, participants were called to their appointed ranges. After moving their equipment and rifles to the firing position assigned to each participant and hanging targets, the contest began.

Well trained and experienced range officers kept everything running smoothly and safely. Participants competing in both rifle and pistol were allowed a small break to wash up, grab a bite to eat and rehydrate before the next part of their competition. Participants, when not on the line, conversed with old friends catching up on current events and making new friends while waiting on results. The day ended with an award ceremony and the announcement of those who had made the team to compete at the National 4-H Shooting Sports Championship held in June. A special thanks to Jim Galbreath, Lindell Newman, Billy Bullard, Charles Urquhart and Leon Wilson for serving as range safety officers and Terry Nelson for keeping things on track. We also want to thank Tim and Myna Laughlin, Gary Strickland, Robert Moore, David Jones, John Holman, Amanda Goepeinger, Michael & Christal Bensch, and Jason Boatman for serving as volunteers in the scoring room.
Upcoming Contests

April 28th  Sporting Clays Competition hosted by McClain County 4-H
Mcloud Quail Ridge

May 19th  El Reno Trap Shoot  hosted by Pawnee County 4-H
OTSA El Reno, 2018 National  Fundraiser

2018-2019 Contest Dates

August 4th  Oklahoma 4-H State 22. Rifle and Pistol Contest at the Oklahoma City Gun Club in Arcadia

August 25th  Oklahoma 4-H State Sporting Clays Contest at Quail Ridge Sporting Clays

Sept 29th  Oklahoma 4-H State Skeet Contest at Oklahoma City Gun Club in Arcadia

October 6th  Oklahoma 4-H State Hunting Skills Contest at the Oklahoma City Gun Club in Arcadia ~ State YHEC

October 20th  Oklahoma 4-H State Trap Contest at OTSA Park, El Reno, Oklahoma

Nov 3rd  Oklahoma 4-H State Muzzleloader Contest at Oklahoma City Gun Club in Arcadia

Winter TBA  Oklahoma 4-H State Indoor Archery Contest

Winter TBA  Oklahoma 4-H State Air Rifle and Air Pistol Contest

Spring TBA  Oklahoma 4-H State Junior and Intermediate Archery Contest & Senior Fun Shoot

Coaches Training

June 1-2, 2018 at Tishomingo, Oklahoma

July 7-8, 2018 at Woodward, Oklahoma

Coach Committee Meeting

May 12, 2018 at the OSU Botanic Garden Educational Center

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http://4h.okstate.edu/projects/shooting-sports-2