

# BB gun team heading to state Shooters win gold at February event

By DICK BOYD  
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The Norton County Rotary BB Gun Team will compete in the Kansas State BB Gun Championships on Saturday in Alma.

Norton BB gun teams have won 37 of 43 state championships during the program's existence and placed runner-up in last year's state competition. Norton did not compete in 1982 because there was no Jaycees chapter. The team is in the fifth year of sponsorship by the Rotary Club since the Jaycees chapter disbanded.

BB gun teams consist of young people from 8 to 14 years of age. The three top teams in each state shoot qualify to compete in the Daisy/Jaycees International BB Gun Championships and Norton has won eight international championships, more than any other team in the world!

Three Norton teams will enter the state championships in Alma on Saturday and a top three finish would again guarantee Norton a spot in the internationals, which will be held again this year in Bowling Green, Ky. on July 3-5.

This year's Yellow Team members are: Kaitlyn Campbell, 14; David Smith, 13; Gabriel Bird, 13; Dalton Vanover, 11; James Berry, 10. Alternates are Lane Archer, 14; Erin Archer, 12.

Cameron Archer returns as the head coach and the Yellow Team coach.

Shooting for the Blue Team this year will be: Zachary Bird, 13; Cameron Heikes, 11; Micheala Sorenson, 10; Jena Risewick, 10; Trenton Sprague, 10.

Mike Campbell and Cole Archer are coaches for the Blue Team.

Members of the Red Team are: Lizzie Smith, 11; Evan Chambers, 10; Weston Harting, 9; Dillon Goss, 8; Brayden Smith, 8.

Red Team coaches are Doug Smith and Ted Hull.

Rules state that a shooter is not allowed to compete in the international shoot two years in a row unless he or she is an alternate. For that reason, teams change dramatically each year.

Despite the overall inexperience of the Norton team, two members of the Yellow Team do have international experience and all five have competed previously in the state shoot.

Kaitlyn Campbell was a member of Norton's international marksmanship team two years ago and was an international alternate the previous year.

Gabriel Bird was an international alternate last year.

Every member of the Blue Team also has previous state shoot experience.

Evan Chambers is the only member of the Red Team with previous state shoot experience.

On Saturday, coach Archer will be assisted by Sara Campbell, who is the classroom instructor. Assisting her in the classroom has been Keri Vanover.

**State shoot schedule**  
This year's state shoot will be hosted by the Kansas State Rifle Association and will be held at the Wabaunsee High School Gym in Alma.

Opening ceremonies will be at 9 a.m.



Practicing from the standing position, the toughest of the four, three members of the Yellow Team are pictured during the Norton County Rotary BB Gun Team's final practice on Monday in preparation for Saturday's State Championships in Alma. Pictured are, from left, David Smith, James Berry and Gabriel Bird. The other two members of the Yellow Team are Kaitlyn Campbell and Dalton Vanover.

- Telegram photo by Dick Boyd

Competition will begin with the written test from 9:15 to 10 a.m. A coaches meeting will also be held during this time.

Shooting from the prone position will be held from 10:15 to 11:45 a.m. Competition from the sitting position will be from 11:50 a.m. until 1:20 p.m. Kneeling position firing will be from 1:25 to 2:55 p.m. Shooting while standing will be from 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Presentation of team and individual awards will be around 5 p.m.

There is no admission charge for the shoot.

**Practicing since October**  
Norton's preparation for the state shoot began in October when the shooters entered the gun safety program, sponsored by Daisy and the National Rifle Association. The first night was a tryout night for youngsters to explore their interest in shooting a BB gun in competition and a number of potential shooters were recruited that night.

After passing the gun safety course, the young girls and boys began practicing marksmanship in each of the four positions and studying for the written test. Practices are held every Monday evening in the back of the Norton

Rotary BB Gun Museum on East U.S. 36 Highway and shooters are also encouraged to practice at home. Building owner Alberta Slaby offers the space in the museum free of charge.

"Many thanks to Alberta and the Rotary Club for their unwavering support," said coach Archer.

"The museum building is really nice for a practice area and there's enough room to keep our targets set up all the time and a separate room for a classroom."

Coach Archer was asked how practices have been going for his young marksmen in preparation for the state shoot.

"We're as ready as we'll ever be," he replied. "We're capable of shooting very well. If everything goes well, we should do all right."

"The regional shoot a week ago helped get the jitters out and made our youngsters better shooters. It was a good experience and helped us get ready for the pressure at the state shoot. It helped us know what we need to work on."

"The important thing is our young people are learning gun safety for a lifetime."

"We are also proud of the sportsmanship shown by our shooters and the good behavior example that they set for other teams when

they come to shoot."

Sara Campbell has been working with the young marksman on their knowledge of gun safety since the written test score is 20 percent of each shooter's final score.

"They've studied hard all year and know the material," said Sara. "They'll do great on the written test if they don't start thinking a little too hard since there are some trick questions."

"Our shooters have been told the importance of the written test. It can make you or break you."

As in the past, several of the shooters are second-generation marksmen. Cameron Archer was a shooter so Lane and Erin and assistant coach and former shooter Cole are second generation.

Angie Bird, mother of Gabriel and Zachary, was also a marksman for the Norton BB Gun Team.

Dalton Vanover's mother, Keri, was also a shooter for the Norton team.

At the conclusion of Monday night's practice, a drawing was held for a Remington 1187 shot gun and the winner is Chris Harting.

Coach Archer thanked the Pheasants Forever chapter for donating the gun.

By DICK BOYD  
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The Norton County BB gun shooters won the championship of the 2009 Northwest Kansas Regional 4-H Shooting Sports Match on Saturday, Feb. 28 in Oakley.

Eleven members of the Norton County Rotary BB Gun Team competed as individuals, then scores of the top four from each county were compiled into team scores.

Shooters competed from the prone, standing, sitting and kneeling positions. There was no written test.

Placing for Norton County individually and their scores were: Kaitlyn Campbell, first, 364; Lane Archer, second, 358; Gabriel Bird, third, 354; Zachary Bird, fourth, 350; David Smith, fifth, 344, 12-14 years; James Berry, first, 362; Erin Archer, second,

358; Michaela Sorenson, fourth, 342; Trenton Sprague, fifth, 341; Dalton Vanover, sixth, 338, 10-11 years; Dylan Goss, fifth, 273, 8 and under.

The Norton County team of Kaitlyn Campbell, James Berry, Erin Archer and Lane Archer shot a score of 1442 to win the championship. Phillips County was second with a 1362 and Logan County was third with an 1197.

Ten of the 11 Norton shooters qualified to compete in the State 4-H Shoot in Alma on April 18. A score of 275 or above was required to qualify.

"We did okay but didn't shoot like we can," said Norton County coach Cameron Archer.

"We were down in scores but it was valuable experience to help us prepare for the upcoming state shoot."

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