

# The 2011 ONTARIO PROVINCIAL CHAMPIONSHIPS



STORY AND PHOTOS BY JAMES TARR TY-25200

**L**ike many USPSA members I had never shot a foreign match, so I took the opportunity to shoot the second largest match in Canada short of their IPSC National Championships. The 2011 Ontario IPSC Provincial Championships was held in June in Kingston, Ontario, at the Frontenac Rifle and Pistol Club (FRPC).

**Jeff Allen on Stage 6, "Junk in Trunk." The pistol and all magazines to be used were in the box in the bed of the truck. RO Jake Hunter had to be quick on his feet to avoid being in front of shooters grabbing their gear and racing back to the front of the truck to engage targets.**

Canada has one-tenth the population of the United States (30+ million), and one tenth the number of IPSC shooters (2000). Fully half of the registered Canadian IPSC shooters live in Ontario, the most populated of their provinces, and their Provincial Cham-

pionship is viewed by many as a preview of their Nationals.

More than 250 competitors shot the "Provincials" over three and a half days, firing 207 rounds (minimum) to complete 11 stages. Because of Canada's high-cap magazine ban, Standard, Production, and even Open Division pistols run with 10-round magazines, so their stages tend to be very technical and frequently accuracy-intensive.

IPSC rules are not the same as the ones we shoot under in the States. For example, Standard (Limited) shooters have to position their equipment like Production shooters, and their gun has to fit in a box (with magazine inserted). Production shooters can use race holsters, but their trigger pulls have to be at least 5 pounds.

**Windsor native Mike Dame reloads on the move on Stage 10, Side To Side. Jennifer Eichenberg has the timer.**



## International Style

Not only did the stage designers like throwing a lot of no-shoots and hard cover around the oval "Classic" IPSC targets, on several stages they used reduced-size IPSC targets. These evil little things are sized 60 percent of the standard IPSC target, which isn't big to begin with, and their A-zones are about the size of a hot dog bun. Intended to simulate distance, they really slow everyone down and separate those who have a happy relationship with their front sight from those who don't.

The reduced-size IPSC targets really came in handy for the one indoor stage of the match, "Hold it." The shooter had to place a weighted toolbox he carried to the end of the shooting area and hang it on a switch. The switch activated an electronically-con-



**Not only were juniors helping out by pasting targets, so were members of the Canadian military. Part of the proceeds of the match went to help Sgt. Scott Milne, a member of 2 Electronic Squadron who was rendered a paraplegic in an accident.**

trolled carousel-like mechanism that rotated 90 degrees. Shooters had to engage the small targets around either side of a barricade, then take the box OFF the switch to expose more targets for a total of 12 rounds. I don't know how many different ways there were to shoot this stage, but I saw three just in our squad. Most of us ran up, dumped

the box onto the switch, shot around both sides of the barricade, then kicked the box off the switch as we did our reload and finished up on the new targets swinging into place.

There were no memory stages, no strong- or weak-hand shooting, just a lot of stages with tight shots. Shooters started with an unloaded gun on three of the stages, including "Junk in Trunk," where we started behind the wheel of a Chevy pickup, with our pistol and all of our magazines in the bed of the truck. At the start signal we had to run back, grab our gun and any ammo we might need, and run in front of the truck to engage one plate and eight paper targets with one round each. With everyone starting with only 10 rounds in the gun, this "simple" nine-round stage chewed up a lot of people.

While many of the stages were tight, with low hit factors, Stage 5, "Long Run 2," was a 70-foot long race to the finish. Even though some of the targets were partials, the farthest one in this 32-round hosefest was only 10 feet away from the shooter. One thing I loved about the excellent stages was that for walls the Canadians actually used walls, not mesh storm fencing.

USPSA shooters tend to treat major matches as extended family reunions. They enjoy hanging around with people who have many of the same views on politics and life in general. In Ontario it was even more so. As bad as some of us in the States have it, Canadian IPSC shooters live under much more onerous gun laws, and seem to be a much more tightly knit group because of it. In Canada, there is no right to keep and bear arms - even in their own homes, Canadians may not keep their guns loaded, and nowhere is concealed carry legal.

On certain ranges, competitors are required to bag their guns between bays. At the FRPC there were no holstered firearms allowed in the vendor/lunch area. When I asked one of the Canadians why, the only answer he could give me was "Socialism." In most places of the world, only the rich elite

have the cash or the pull to buy the guns needed to shoot IPSC. In that aspect, Canada is more like the United States, and you'll find yourself shooting next to mechanics as well as lawyers.

The vendor tents at the Provincials rivaled what I used to see at the U.S. Nationals, and the "swag bag" given to every competitor was the best I've ever received. There were a number of juniors helping out at the match as well as uniformed Canadian soldiers-some of the proceeds of the match were going to assist Sgt. Scott Milne, a member of 2 Electronic Squadron who was rendered a paraplegic in an accident. I've never had the military pasting my targets before, and it was rather humbling.

The FRPC in Kingston (host of the Canadian Nationals) is located on the Northeast corner of Lake Ontario, almost directly north of Syracuse, New York. To get there from Detroit, we had to drive through the metropolitan Toronto area (MTA). More than 7 million people live in the MTA, roughly one quarter of Canada's population, and the traffic would make a veteran Chicago driver curl into a fetal ball and start whimpering. Avoid the MTA dur-



**One of the differences between IPSC and USPSA is illustrated here. Jeff Allen's Ghost holster is perfectly legal for Production Division. He did the engraving on the grips himself.**

ing rush hour-you have been warned.

The match hotel was the Courtyard Marriott, which was the nicest match hotel I've ever been in. It was adjacent to the King's Crossing outlet mall, and across the parking lot from a Boston Pizza, a popular Canadian chain. Ironically, there are no Boston Pizzas in Boston, or in the United States for that matter.

I live in the Detroit area, and we frequently have Canadians come over the border to shoot our local matches, but few Americans head across to do the same. I think there are two reasons for this-paperwork, and Canada's 10-round magazine restriction.

Regular *Front Sight* contributor Roy Neal is one of the few Americans who has ventured south to shoot with the Canucks (Windsor, Ontario, is south of Detroit), and he guided me through the paperwork process, which wasn't as bad as I'd feared. You'll need:

1. A Letter of Invitation to Compete from the match (normally posted on the club's website).
2. Prior to the match, you'll need to submit a Non-Resident Firearm Declaration Form (CAFC 909) to the Chief Firearm Officer of the Province along with the Letter of Invitation and the specific info about the gun(s) you plan to bring with you, and all of your personal information (including U.S. Passport number). Most clubs have a link on their site where you can obtain this form.
3. When approved, the CFO will give you an Authorization to Transport Restricted or Prohibited Firearms (ATT), which will be good for a 60-day span covering the dates you'll need it.
4. Prior to leaving the country, stop at U.S. Customs and obtain a form 4457. This is a Certificate of Registration for Items Taken Abroad-unless Customs knows the guns in your possession came out of the United States originally, getting them back in the country might

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be very tricky. U.S. Customs will need to check the serial numbers on the guns, but that's it.

5. When crossing into Canada (in addition to your passport) you'll need to take your completed but unsigned 909 and ATT, plus whatever U.S. registra-



**Production shooter Genevieve Farago engages the first target on Stage 7, "Down The Hall" with Stephen Chappelle running the timer. This unique setup had shooters run it twice. They first engaged targets to the left of the doors and then down the hall through windows to the left, then ran it again as Stage 8, "Right Side Is Smaller." For Stage 8, the shooter started in the same spot, but engaged targets along the right wall and through windows to the right after going through the double doors.**

tion documents you have to show you own the guns you're bringing, to Canadian Customs. They'll want to check the serial numbers on the guns, and you'll be charged \$25 Canadian. The pistols need to be in a locked case and equipped with a trigger or cable lock, with the ammunition separate. If you've never been out of the country, think of Customs Agents like the TSA...except that they have the authority to not just search every inch of you, but take your car apart down to the smallest screw, so be polite.

Standard Division was the biggest with 100 competitors, and won by Mike Burrell, a familiar face at the U.S. Nationals. Production Division had 85 shooters and was won handily by Jean-Phillippe "J.P." Drolet, a GM who has finished high at the USPSA Nationals. Open Division is not as popular in Canada, but still drew 52 shooters, led by GM Nikita Markessinis who eked out a win over Team SV's Alex Szakacs. With only 10 competitors Revolver Division had the most GMs (2), with Paul Laird walking away with the title.

If you thought you'd never have the money to shoot a foreign match, but live within driving distance of Ontario, you should give Canada a look. The stages were well-designed, the people are friendly, everyone speaks English, and you can drink the water (if they run out of beer).

