

Cannonball Clay Dusters aiming at state

By Luann Dart

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With a sharp focus and steady hand, 11 members of the Cannonball Clay Dusters will step onto the range this weekend to compete in the state tournament of the North Dakota State High School Clay Target League.

The state tournament June 13-15 at The Shooting Park in Horace will draw 1,562 students representing 97 high school teams from across the state, according to a news release.

During the season, a record-breaking 2,347 student athletes participated in the North Dakota State High School Clay Target League. Those athletes represent 107 high school teams across the state, supported by hundreds of coaches, team staff and other volunteers.

Now, the season culminates with state competition in trapshooting and skeet shooting.

During the regular season, teams shoot at their own range and submit weekly scores online. Each athlete's season average categorizes them into novice, junior varsity or varsity levels to enter the state competition as teams and individuals. Local teams are composed of the top five individuals at each level.

Because of the participation numbers, the Cannonball Clay Dusters only have a junior varsity team in trapshooting. All 11 will compete as individuals in trapshooting and eight will compete as individuals in skeet shooting. Zane Fitchner, Westin Gilman, Brody Haase and Joseph Lien will compete on the varsity level in trapshooting. Hank

Dinius, Westin Gilman, Joseph Lien and Hunter Smith will compete on the varsity level in skeet.

The team started in December 2022 as the Mott-Regent Wildfire Clay Target Team, then stepped onto the range with a new name this year after the New England and Elgin-New Leipzig schools were added to the team. The name of Cannonball Clay Dusters was chosen to represent the new team.

Also new to the team is a home shooting range. The New England Rod & Gun Club generously donated its old range and clubhouse for use by the youth team to the Cannonball Sportsmen, a nonprofit group which manages the clay target team.

"That has truly been a blessing," Coach Don Gilman says. Previously, the team hauled equipment in and out of the shooting area each week, creating much more work for everyone involved. The range was donated to the Cannonball Sportsmen last June after it had gone unused for more than 25 years.

"So, there is a lot of work to do," Gilman says. The group has already made improvements to the clubhouse and mounted the traps in the trap houses so they can remain in place.

"I think it's been really good for the kids. They have their own range to be proud of and we consider it their range. Although it belongs to the Cannonball Sportsman, it belongs to the kids. This is all about the kids," Gilman says. Restorations and updates have been made and are continuing to be made to the range and clubhouse, thanks to donations and grants from organizations,

such as the New England American Legion, the New England Community Foundation and the Mott-Regent Community Foundation.

"It's not a cheap sport," Gilman says. "Without our supporters, we wouldn't be able to do it."

The Cannonball Clay Dusters offers another avenue for kids to excel, he says.

"Some of these kids don't participate in a lot of other athletics and this is something that they can go out and be a part of. I have a great group of kids. They get along well. They encourage each other. I think they've built some relationships," Gilman says.

During their first year of competition, the team finished second in the state in junior varsity. This year, the team ended the regular season with a third-place finish in both trap and skeet in the conference.

"It's absolutely fantastic. These kids are always above and beyond anything I could expect of them. Our team is fairly young and to compete at the level that they do, it's pretty unbelievable," Gilman says. "Our kids continue to perform at the peak of the sport. I couldn't be more proud of these kids."

Those competing at the state tournament include:

Trapshooting - Varsity: Zane Fitchner, Westin Gilman, Brody Haase, and Joseph Lien; **Junior varsity:** Hank Dinius, Anthony Dörner, Cheyanne Geerts, Mark Schmidt, and Hunter Smith

Novice: Joseph Schmidt and Andrew Sprenger

Skeet shooting - Varsity: Hank Dinius, Westin Gilman, Joseph Lien, and Hunter Smith; **Junior varsity:** Brody Haase and Mark Schmidt

Novice: Zane Fitchner and Joseph Schmidt



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Aside from running her business, Newhall has a degree in Ranch Management, Dog training, and has background as a calving specialist. She is returning to school for her Business Administration degree.

Naturez Girl Ranch products are sold in surrounding states including South Dakota, Wyoming, and Montana. Her products can be found in Carson at Double R Meats and orders can be placed on her website at naturez-girl.com

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In the matter of the Estate of Maudell Eisenbarth, deceased. Notice is hereby given that the undersigned has been appointed personal representative of the above named estate. All persons have claims against the said deceased are required to present their claims within three months after the first publication of this notice or said claims will be forever barred.

Claims must be mailed to:
Nancy Eisenbarth
Personal Representative
PO Box 21
Carson, ND 58529

/s/Nancy Eisenbarth
Nancy Eisenbarth,
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