

Fall 2010

HUNTER EDUCATION INSTRUCTORS' NEWSLETTER



The men and women who volunteer as hunter education instructors serve as teachers, mentors and coaches. The service they deliver is, quite literally, lifesaving.

Dealing With This, That and The Other in Hunter Education

By Allen Basala

We are all ambassadors.

As hunter education instructors, we are ambassadors of the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission and of safe, ethical and knowledgeable hunters. And, as certified hunter education instructors, we have to be on point, remembering *our* mission, not *my* mission.

We are here to educate, not indoctrinate. Those in our classes with other motives may not agree with hunting on gamelands policies, the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, outdoor ethics, safety issues or the appropriateness of various hunting methods. But that's not our concern.

A firearms instructor was lampooned in a major newspaper recently. Although I do not have the perspective of all the other professionals and current conservation leaders, I had some thoughts which came to mind after the original article appeared and the follow up op-ed.

We never really know who exactly attends our classes. We really don't know them or their motives in taking the course. But, regardless of their views or motives, if they have signed up for the course, we teach them in a fair and objective manner.

Years ago when I was leading a team of instructors, I had non-hunters bordering on anti-hunting attend the classes. Some told me their views ahead of time.

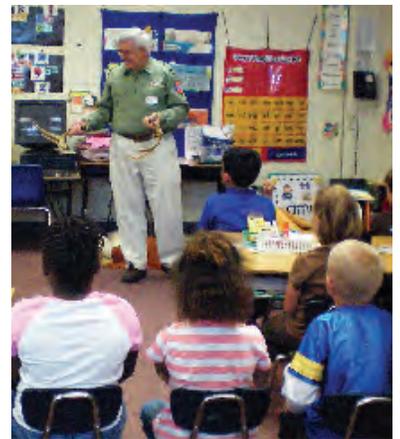
Others did not. Some were in class so that they could secure a hunting license and then purchase a gamelands permit (e.g., to ride horses on gamelands). Others were members of advocacy groups or sought out any biased, inaccurate, or outlandish comments made by other students and instructors.

Despite the motives of our students, our immediate objectives are to instruct, educate, and demonstrate in a manner such that the students have an opportunity to get their salient certifications. More importantly, we want the students to learn and understand such that the students apply the principles of safety, conservation, ethics, game care, wildlife identification, equipment handling and maintenance in the field, home, and elsewhere.

Knowing your audience helps in the education process. With more than two decades of teaching at the university level and as a volunteer instructor, I learned that knowing my audience makee me a better teacher. Consider, during introductory session, taking the time to ask the class, "Why are you here?" If no student provides an answer, consider asking a few of them directly. If they don't have an answer, fine.

But in least you showed that you are interested in them and why they are in your class. You can then segue into the purpose and general scope of the course you are teaching, perhaps using examples which will appeal to the novice, parent or seasoned veteran. I don't think any harm can come from this.

And, perhaps it will provide some good.



Basala, a longtime HEI, with a local elementary school class



With grandson Christian

Youth Hunter Education Challenge Turns 25

For more than 400 young participants from 16 states, it was being a part of history. The NRA's Youth Hunter Education Challenge celebrated its silver anniversary. North Carolina sent 65 participants and 15 coaches to this year's YHEC in Mansfield, Pennsylvania.

YHEC, an NRA sponsored competition, is based on North Carolina's Youth Hunter Education Skills Tournaments, which began in 1978.

"YHEC is a program that teaches many skills other than hunting," said Bill Poole, director of NRA's Education and Training Division. "Teamwork, leadership, perseverance, and good sportsmanship are just a few of the life skills that young hunters take away from the YHEC program."

Participants and teams from North Carolina dominated the 25th annual competition, held July 26-30, in both the senior and junior categories.

Tar Heel competitors took first and third place in both junior and senior individual categories, first place in the junior team category and third place in the senior team category.

The Youth Hunter Education Challenge is a demanding week-long series of events, featuring shooting competition in .22-caliber rifle and muzzleloader at knock-down targets, shotgun on a sporting clays course and archery at three dimensional game targets. A non-shooting component consisted of orienteering, wildlife identification, a written hunter responsibility and ethics exam, and a hunter safety trail test.

"North Carolina would like to thank the NRA for everything they do for youth shooting sports, this year and every year," said Travis Casper, assistant hunting safety coordinator. "And the Hunter Education Program would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the competitors, their families and coaches from North Carolina to get to this level of success. We also have to thank the schools and school systems that recognize the value of this activity and encourage participation."

On this year's podium:

Junior Individual Overall Winners

1st Place: Hunter Efird, North Carolina Park Ridge Sharpshooters

2nd Place: Bryce Bason, Pennsylvania Junior Blue

3rd Place: Lea Efird, North Carolina Park Ridge Sharpshooters

Senior Individual Overall Winners

1st Place: Levi Epps, North Carolina

2nd Place: Jason LeVan, Pennsylvania Senior Gold

3rd Place: Billy Janos, North Carolina Forbush High School Red



Junior Team Overall Winners

1st Place: North Carolina Park Ridge Sharpshooters

2nd Place: Pennsylvania Junior Blue

3rd Place: Oregon Junior Team

Senior Team Overall Winners

1st Place: Pennsylvania Senior Gold

2nd Place: Pennsylvania Senior Blue

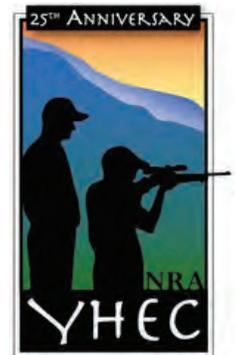
3rd Place: North Carolina Forbush High Red

Another notable performance from North Carolinians was the South Davie junior team, which won first place in Junior Team Shotgun competition.

Since its founding in 1985, YHEC has helped create a generation of the safest, most responsible, most knowledgeable young hunters you'll find anywhere. In the process, the program has sparked lifelong friendships, ignited a passion for the outdoors in more than 1.3 million kids, and created a close-knit family of volunteers, coaches, participants and alumni. Mentoring is really what YHEC is all about—teaching kids about firearms and bows, hunting ethics, and the outdoors. Next year YHEC returns to the NRA Whittington Center in Raton, New Mexico, which last hosted the International YHEC in 2009.

For more information on the YHEC program, contact NRA's Hunter Services Department at (703) 267-1524 or visit www.nrayhec.org.

For the first time, the complete final results report can be downloaded from the NRA at <http://www.nrahq.org/hunting/yhec/international.asp>



Hunter Efird and Levi Epps



On Target with the State Hunter Education Coordinator

There are plenty of new regulations for the 2010-11 hunting, trapping and fishing seasons, as you can see in the Regulations Digest (at www.ncwildlife.org).

In summary, there were 66 new rules that went into effect. Along with these new regulations, the proposed hunting and trapping rule changes approved by the Commission in March 2009 but were delayed for legislative review also have gone into effect. Among the delayed regulations, the use of crossbows in North Carolina is now considered a legal hunting method that may be used by licensed hunters anytime bow-and-arrow hunting is allowed.

This change in hunting regulations has prompted an increase in crossbow sales. What has not changed are the requirements for legally purchasing a crossbow in North Carolina. State law requires that anyone buying or otherwise receiving a crossbow in North Carolina first obtain a pistol permit from the sheriff's office in their county of residence or hold a valid concealed handgun permit [reference state statutes N.C.G.S. 14-402, N.C.G.S. 14-403.] Questions about obtaining pistol permits and issuance of concealed handgun permits should be directed to the local sheriff's department. The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission does not regulate the sale or purchase of firearms and crossbows.



Capt. Chris Huebner

A crossbow can also be used to take any game bird, game animal or nongame animal for which there is a season. Crossbows may not be used to harvest migratory game birds on Sundays. Crossbows must have a minimum draw weight of 150 pounds. Only arrows (sometimes known as bolts) with a fixed minimum broadhead width of 7/8 inch or a mechanically opening broadhead with a minimum width of 7/8 inch in the open position may be used for taking bear, deer, wild boar or wild turkey. Blunt-type bolts may be used in taking small animals and birds, including, but not limited to, rabbits, squirrels, quail, grouse, and pheasants. Poisonous, drugged, barbed or explosive bolts may not be used for taking any game.

A monumental, and sometimes controversial change included in the delayed regulations, allows lawful archery equipment and falconry to be used on private lands on Sundays (migratory game birds may not be taken on Sundays).

Private land is any land not owned or controlled by a unit of government (federal, state or local). Property owned by persons, businesses and corporations is considered private. Public lands include game lands, federal refuges, city and county properties. Falconry is also a legal method of take on public lands on Sundays.

Also, archery methods may be used to harvest deer on private lands and game lands during muzzleloader season.

Hunters have also asked about blaze orange requirements in light of the regulations changes. Here are the official answers.

Q. Are you required to wear blaze orange while hunting with a bow on Sunday during muzzleloader or gun season?

A. Yes. State law says, "Any person hunting deer during a deer firearms season shall wear hunter orange." The muzzleloader season and the gun season each begin with the first day of the listed season and continue through the last day of the listed season, with all dates being included. Therefore, the muzzleloader and gun seasons are technically open on Sundays, but a hunter's method of take is limited to archery and falconry on private lands and falconry on public lands. Because Sundays are still part of the deer firearms season, hunter orange must be worn except for landowners exempted in state law. The blaze orange law does not apply to a landholder, his/her spouse, or children who are hunting on land held by the landholder.

Q. What about hunting game other than deer?

A. State law says, "Any person hunting game animals other than foxes, bobcats, raccoons, and opossum, or hunting upland game birds other than wild turkeys, with the use of firearms, must wear a cap or hat made of hunter orange material or an outer garment of hunter orange visible from all sides." So, hunters do not need to wear hunter orange on Sundays while hunting the applicable game animals and game birds since they will not be using firearms.

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North Carolina Hunter Education Program – Communication and Outreach

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Comments and submissions are welcome.

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North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

Hunter Education Program

Be Courteous, Be Careful, Be Seen, Be Safe

Division of Law Enforcement

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