

West Side Sportsman's Club

Practical Action Committee

In 2012, a group of shooters that had been shooting IDPA wanted to bring that shooting discipline to WSSC. They formed the Practical Action Shooting group, (PAS) that was comprised of 5-6 dedicated shooters. They started by building their own props and preparing to host their first match. In April of that same year, they hosted their first shooting event with the goal of IDPA affiliation, which was secured in March 2013.

With a few of the shooters venturing out competing in sanctioned matches, there was almost an immediate dream of hosting an IDPA sanctioned match of our own, however, we simply did not have the facility to make that a reality. As more of the PAS group started participating in the sanctioned matches, there was an interest in working matches as safety officers. The PAS group organized IDPA safety officer training to build a pool of SO's. Once trained, many worked in various matches in the area.

In 2016, a major berm project was undertaken by the club to expand the ranges to give the club the ability to host a multitude of events that were not previously possible. The expansion included an additional 6 large event bays as well as 6 smaller pistol bays. This laid the foundation to hold the first major event of its kind at WSSC, thus the dream of hosting our own sanctioned IDPA match became reality.

By the end of 2016, the PAS group was in heavy planning for the match, which was scheduled for Nov 11th, 2017. There was a lot of discussion on what to name the match. We stumbled across a website with a list of holidays, most of which were very obscure, naturally we tossed around ideas, envisioned stages and scenarios for all of the different holidays; Bat Appreciation Day, National Thesaurus Day, Cow Appreciation Day and Plant Appreciation Day. The list went on and on. With the thought of using the holidays as stages, naming the match Holiday Havoc was the obvious choice.

The next step was to select a match director; Kevin Farrar accepted that responsibility and was the MD for 2018. In 2019 & 2020 Jay Hile took the responsibilities to continue the story. Along with their dedication, there was a core group of individuals that also worked day and night for these events.

One of the main goals was to ensure that everyone who attended this match would not forget it and could not wait to come again the following year. Some of the highlights in the match was including a low light stage every year, using cowboy town and their elaborate facades, incorporating a lot of movement with varying difficulty. Another goal was to design the stages so they are fun for newer shooters while still challenging for seasoned competitors.

Our match has been comprised of all sorts of stages, from going up and down a teeter-totter and walking a beam engaging the bad guys on National Take a Walk in the Park Day, to using a light sabre to activate a target on Star Wars Day. We've had to defend ourselves from scallywags on Talk Like a Pirate Day as well as thugs hell bent on attacking during your observance of International Museum Day, with scenarios from another stage like "Blah, blah, blah criminals. Blah, blah, blah take your life. Blah, blah, blah save yourself" on Blah, Blah, Blah Day.

In our low-light stage this year, you had to defend yourself while fishing at night in a boat with your friend moving frantically in front of you on National Fishing Day. Who is kidding who, our low-light stages have historically been more like no-light stages. This year was probably the darkest ever, once the stage

lights were turned off, you literally could not see your hand in front of your face. The lower half of the threat targets were hard cover since they were “in the water”, making the targets even less visible while the non-threat swinging in front of you in the boat had high visibility reflective tape on it. Many claimed, “the back targets were there somewhere” but seemed to disappear. The stage simply absorbed the light that your flashlight emitted.

For 2018 in cowboy town, you had to engage targets while avoiding the friendly’s in the moving mine cart on National Miners Day. You pushed a tee-handle plunger, which released the mining cart; the cart was on a dished track, which cause the cart to roll back and forth in front of you with three non-threats in the cart. While engaging the bad guys you had to avoid that moving cart which took up a lot of space, and just when you thought you had the position figured out the cart would stop in a slightly different place forcing you to readjust. It really forced shooters to move making small adjustments on the fly.

Probably one of our most talked about stages was hitting your targets while swinging in 2019’s Ferris Wheel Day. Imagine sitting on the “Ferris wheel” seat, which is actually a porch swing, feet dangling in the air. As you await the anticipated “beep” of the timer you are trying to figure out how to keep this swing from moving, then hearing the beep, you raise to get a sight picture, the springs on the swing have you moving up and down and swaying side to side with every transition moving you in a different direction. After engaging six targets, two steel poppers each activating a tip out threat followed by a non-threat to cover throwing a reload in there to boot and the stage is finally over. You get off the swing, look back telling your fellow squad mates, good luck with that one..!

As you can see, we take great pride in coming up with things that will keep competitors entertained and coming back. Talk to anyone who has attended and they will likely tell you how fun the matches are and how they plan on returning next year. As we look into 2022, Doug Klueh will continue as the MD with plans to keep that vision alive and well. Details are well underway for another great match in 2022.