



The Badger High School Trap Shooting Club finished 10th out of 42 teams at the state tournament on June 25. Front row, from left: Julian Koester, Rebecca Polheber, Rachael Hayes, Amanda Shea, Justine Hull, Lisa Ceisel and John Kennedy. Second row: coach Eugene Altwies, Noah Rejholec, Jordan Koehling, Dawson Comer, Connor Love, Tim Osnacz, Bobby Ebbers, Ben Carlson, Ian Darbro, Shawn Meadows, Dylan Straube, Lane Larson, Brad Carlson and coach RJ Klade. Third row: Croy Kirch, James Lewis, Jordan Martz, Paul Smith, Seth Murphy and Hunter Otwaska. Not pictured are head coach Judd Klade, coach Bruce Meier, Austin Pease, Cayleen Ryan, Connor Skidds, Eric Mullen, Greg Hullman, Hunter Schwartz, Jen Freeman, Jordan Zeigler, Josh Meier, Kaden Herner, Michael Foley, Michael Frazier, Noah Sepke, Ryan Winders, Tyler Love and Diana Altwies. (Submitted photo)

Badgers trap 10th at state

By David Michels
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The Badger High School Trap Shooting Club held its penultimate practice on Wednesday, June 29, and coaches and students alike were all smiles as they prepared to break for summer vacation, joking, laughing and playing a few games of Annie for good measure.

The game, named for the legendary Annie Oakley, is a test of both marksmanship and patience, as shooters stand side-by-side in a long line while taking turns shooting down a clay trap in groups of three, and was a welcome release for all.

The trapshooting season is a long and grueling one, which the Badgers began all the way back in February, when the students registered with snow still on the ground.

In March they officially began shooting, and the club simply kept firing away until they

capped their season with a state appearance on June 25.

But despite a wealth of talent, the Badgers suffered a minor setback to their season finale.

"We had a pretty good team this year, but when we went to state we started out really rough," Badger senior Bobby Ebbers said of the club's performance at state. "I just think we had a bunch of nerves going into state."

A sluggish start to the tournament couldn't derail the Lake Geneva squad completely, however, as the varsity shooters finished strong to clinch 10th place among the 46-team field, ranked high among the

state's elite.

Meanwhile, Badger's JV finished 22nd out of 50.

Ebbers and Ben Carlson led the way for the varsity Badgers, each shooting a team-high 97 out of 100.

Jordan Martz followed just one point back at 96, and Dawson Comer and Rebecca Polheber tied for fourth on the team with a tally of 89.

Ian Darbo trailed just behind with a score of 88, followed by Bradley Carlson, Lane Larson and Tim Osnacz, who each tied with a mark of 87.

Michael Foley and Greg Hulman tied for 10th on the team with identical scores of 85.

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Senior Bobby Ebbers led the Badger Trap Shooting Club at state, tying teammate Ben Carlson with a team-high score of 97, and also took first place at the Junior Olympics State Championship in May. (Photo by David Michels/Regional News)

Ready, don't aim, fire

A first-time trap shooter's experience on the range

Growing up, I played my fair share of video games.

The classic Duck Hunt for Nintendo was a favorite among my friends and I, as was Call of Duty, and when we grew older we eventually ventured outside, opting to pepper each other with brightly colored paintballs instead.

But in my 25 years, I've never actually fired a real, lead-spitting firearm.

At least, not until recently, when the members of the Badger High School Trap Shooting Club offered to let me join them for a round out at the Powers Lake Sportsmans Club.

Trap shooting has always been something that I've wanted to try,

but to this point the opportunity had just never presented itself.

So when I received the invitation I jumped at the chance.

It wasn't until after I agreed and my exuberance began to fade that I realized, I have no idea what I'm doing.

And that sentiment was on full display when I joined the Badgers at their practice on Wednesday.

En masse, the members of the club asked me if I'd ever shot trap before, to which I told them no.

"That's OK," they reassured me, "It's just like hunting."

Unfortunately, I haven't done that either, and I told them as much.

"Oh," they said, collectively. "And they're going to let you

handle a loaded weapon?"

That's the plan, I replied.

In trap shooting, up to five shooters can compete at once on a given range.

Each shooter takes five shots from five specific stations for a total of 25, and each station is precisely 16 yards behind the trap house, a large wooden box which houses the machine that hurtles the clay pigeons up into the sky.

So while the first crop of Badgers warmed up with a round on the range, coach Bruce Meier introduced me to the team gun, a matte black semiautomatic 12-gauge shotgun, and took me through the basics, demonstrating how to properly hold the firearm, as well as how to load it and how to turn the safety on and off.

He also explained proper gun etiquette, some of which is common sense.

Namely, don't load the gun until it's your turn to fire, and

don't aim it at anyone.

Ever.

Bruce also imparted me with a peculiar veteran tip, telling me not to aim the gun at all.

The thing with shotguns, Bruce explained, is that you really don't have to be that precise with your accuracy.

The way the buckshot explodes from the barrel, the shooter just has to be pointing in the general direction of the trap when they squeeze the trigger.

That's the hardest thing to teach, he said, keeping fresh-faced shooters from aiming the shotgun like a rifle, with one eye closed.

Instead, the key is to keep both eyes open, and to keep your neck as level as possible, opposed to craning it to the side.

"And don't aim," he reiterated. "Point."

And that was fine by me.

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Hitting into the holidays

Latest scores and standings from the YMCA

With barbecues and fireworks looming large on the horizon of this holiday weekend, not all of the city of Lake Geneva YMCA's baseball and softball leagues were in action this past week.

Below are the latest scores and standings for each of the local teams, both for those teams which played and those that took time off for the Fourth of July.

Friday Night Men's Softball Standings

Fat Cat's	6-0
Stahulak Concrete	4-0
WLKG Radio	4-0
Foley's	4-1
Timmy's Tools	3-3
Advocare	2-3
Matustik Builders	2-3
Merry Water Farms	2-4
LG Golf Cart	2-4
He-Bros	2-4
Help Wanted	1-4
Stinebrink's	0-6

Major League Baseball

The Lake Geneva YMCA's Major League wasn't standing pat over the holiday weekend, however, fitting in two slates of games before the festivities and fireworks.

Starting the week out strong, GLP Automotive enjoyed a 14-1 demolition of Basso Builders, while Voyager Capital Management downed WLKG Radio 96.1 FM 11-5.

GLP also eked out a one-run win over Upper Crust Pizzeria, defeating the pizzaiolos 8-7.

Peck & Weis maintained its grip on first place in the standings with a 4-3 victory over Voyager, and WLKG got back on the winning track with a 6-5 win over Basso Builders.

Standings

Peck & Weis	6-1
Upper Crust	4-3
Rae's Towing	4-3
Voyager	4-4
WLKG Radio	3-4-1
GLP Automotive	2-5-1
Basso Builders	1-4-2

Senior League Softball

Undeclared no more.

The Spinal Rehabilitation Center of Lake Geneva's formerly unblemished record was marred last week as the team suffered its first loss of the season in a 5-1 bout with Central Vending.

Lake Geneva Chiropractic also logged a W last week in an offensive onslaught, dismantling Kokodynski Orthodontics 15-8.

Standings

Spinal Rehab.	7-1
Central Vending	3-4
Kokodynski Ortho.	2-4-1
LG Chiropractic	2-5-1

U-12 Cactus League

Each of the three Lake Geneva teams had a busy week leading up to Independence Day weekend.

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Badger/Ebbers wins gold medal

Going for gold

But for Ebbers, state was just the cherry on top of one sweet, sweet season.

The real highlight came back in May, when he qualified for and subsequently won the gold medal in the 2016 Junior Olympic State Championship in Nekoosa.

Ebbers' championship performance was also his debut at the Junior Olympics, he said, and that stage is another beast entirely.

The trap house was roughly 60 feet long, with 15 traps inside, Ebbers said, and each shooting station has three designated traps.

"But you don't know which one is going to throw and they're going about 70 miles per hour, so some of them are going twice as fast as these," Ebbers said, pointing to the traps the Badgers use for practice at the Powers Lake Sportsmans Club.

But despite all that, he still managed to log a final score of 93 out of 125 shots fired on the first day of the competition, punching his ticket to the finals.

Originally, Ebbers said that his goal was just to qualify for the national tournament held in Colorado last June.

It wasn't until he made it into the final six that the realization he could actually win the gold dawned on him.

"When you get in the finals you get a clean slate, so I was like, 'I can win this right now,'" Ebbers

said.

And then he did.

"I ended up winning and, me and my parents, we couldn't believe it," Ebbers said.

"Once he got in there he stepped up," Badger coach RJ Klade said of Ebbers' win. "Everyone else fell apart and he kind of stayed together, and that's what a lot of this is."

Consistency is the key to this sport, Klade stressed, and on that day Ebbers was the definition of dependable.

Ebbers said that the gravity of his win didn't really settle in until he was in the car on his way home, but even now, he doesn't want to take the sport too seriously.

That would take the fun out of it, and fun, above all else, is what's important, Ebbers said.

"Once you start taking it too seriously it's not fun anymore," he said, because if you shoot poorly it can ruin your day, and even when you shoot well you'll just wish you'd done better.

About more than wins

That sentiment is shared by all of the Badger athletes and coaches, who make an effort to put fun, and safety, first.

"There's a lot of fun," Klade said. "Everyone's safe, but everyone has fun. Everyone wants to come to practice, and you don't get that with some other sports. Hot or rain this score counts."

or shine, the kids want to shoot and have fun."

And most importantly, there's no limit on who can compete.

"That's the best part," team administrator Diana Altwies said. "Everyone's included, everyone participates for everything."

During the school year, the team fielded as many as 45 students, and unlike football or basketball, no one was ever sidelined.

Even though they are technically a club, not an official school sport, the Badgers field both a varsity and a JV squad like other sports teams.

But where a shooter ranks is less a matter of skill than seniority.

"First year, you have to be on JV. That's just the way the rules are," Klade explained, but once a student weathers their rookie season they are automatically elevated to varsity from that point forward.

And the same academic restrictions apply to trapshooting as do to any other sport sponsored by the school.

Students on the team are required to keep their grades up if they wish to compete, otherwise they'll be suspended from competition.

That's the only reason a student wouldn't be allowed to participate.

"It's like a big family, everyone gets along great," Klade said. "Everyone has a fun time. Everyone shoots and everyone's score counts."

QUAD NO.		EVENT										DATE	CLUB	CITY														
NAME	HDCP	PAID	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	TOTAL
Justine			0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	10
Eric			1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	14	
John			1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	17	
Bobby			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	25	
David			1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	18	

Despite his inexperience, sports editor David Michels managed to score 18 out of 25 in his first attempt at trap shooting. (Photo by David Michels/Regional News)

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Trap/Beginner's luck

And that was fine by me.

The less aiming I had to do the better, I figured, and I told as much to the other shooters as we waited for our turn on the range, adding that my goal was just to hit at least one trap.

"I mean, you're bound to hit something eventually," Justine Hull, a recent Badger graduate and one of the senior members of the club, told me.

I told her that she'd be surprised, and, as it turns out, I was right.

We were all surprised. When it was finally our turn, I walked up to the line, nervous from my toes up.

The group allowed me to take a few practice shots to familiarize myself with the gun, and naturally, I forgot nearly all of Bruce's lessons before even firing a shot.

"Um, how do I load it again?" I asked the crowd meekly.

But it was then, after a brief refresher course, I discovered something else I didn't know about trap shooting.

Apparently, I'm a bit of a natural.

My first practice shot turned the trap into a puff of neon-orange dust, and my first three shots in competition did the same as my competitors stared on,

incredulous.

In truth, I didn't even realize that I'd hit my first practice shot; I lurched backward after firing and lost sight of the shattered pigeon.

And, assuming I'd missed, it wasn't until I overcorrected and led the next trap by more than a few feet that Bruce told me I should do what I did the first time.

"You hit that one," he said.

I did? Oh, I thought. Yeah, I'll just do that again.

And from that point, I was locked in. In total, I logged a final score of 18, finishing second behind just the resident Junior Olympics champion himself, Bobby Ebbers, who shot a perfect 25.

Still, it was a solid score for a novice. And no one was in more disbelief than me.

Some of the Badger shooters looked at me doubtfully, asking again if it was really my first time shooting, while others commended me for my latent firearm skills.

Personally, I chock it up to beginner's luck, but who knows?

Maybe those long hours of splattering my childhood buddies with green and yellow paint paid off after all.

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YMCA/Scores and standings

Through three games, HobbyTown emerged victorious twice, defeating the Big Foot Astros and dismantling North Boone 11-0.

The squad's only loss of the week came against the Delavan Township team. Digital Innovations

also played three games last week, winning two.

The Lake Geneva squad defeated Clinton and Hebron, before losing to Elkhorn by just one run, 5-4.

And rounding out the Lake Geneva trio, Edward Jones logged just its second

win of the season in a 19-4 shellacking of North Boone.

Edward Jones also fell short in a 10-6 bout with Williams Bay.

Standings

Digital Innovations	8-4
HobbyTown	8-5
Edward Jones	2-11

DREAM TEAM

The Dream Team returns.

Games start at 3:15 p.m. on Monday, July 11 and Wednesday July 13 at Veterans Park as the Dream Team takes on other local teams. Action is expected on all four ball diamonds in the park.

Started in 2001 by John Swanson, a special needs teacher at Lakeland School in Elkhorn, the Dream Team is made up of special needs boys and girls ages 6 to 20.

Some of the kids are in wheelchairs. Others need help finding their way around the base paths.

But the Dream Team draws volunteers like a pop-up draws infielders.

If there is rain, call the Lake Geneva YMCA for information at (262) 248-6211.

For more information about the Dream Team, call Swanson at (262) 325-3600.

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