Kansas 4-Hers win national 4-H shooting sports competition

Title is first-ever for a Kansas team

By Jessica Jensen, K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. — For the first time ever, Kansas has won the national 4-H shooting sports Tom Davison Sweepstakes Trophy.

The group of Kansas 4-Hers beat out 39 other states – which included 169 teams and 691 competitors – to win the week-long event, which was held in Grand Island, Neb.

“Winning the competition felt like one of those moments where a person is too awestruck to react – surreal if you will,” said Riley County 4-Her Bryce Beckman.

Nancy Becker, president of the Riley County 4-H Foundation and national coordinator for the Kansas team, credited the team’s coaches and the youth participating with doing “a great job.” While some team members placed high in their individual events, she said the points scored by all Kansas participants contributed to the Sweepstakes trophy.

“It’s those (top overall) results and the whole team effort that won the trophy this year. I’m proud of all of them.”

The shooting sports national championship is open to 4-H members ages 14-18 who compete in nine disciplines: air pistol, air rifle, compound archery, recurve archery, hunting skills, muzzleloading, shotgun, small bore pistol and small bore rifle.

Participating states are allowed to enter up to four youth in each discipline at the national competition. The state with the highest overall team ranking wins the Tom Davison Sweepstakes Trophy.
Kansas 4-Hers are eligible for the national team based on having participated in the state shooting sports match. Kansas selects teams based on each 4-Her’s rank, state match results and applications received.

Becker said Kansas’ team included 36 youth from 22 counties competing in all nine disciplines.

Riley County 4-H member Colin Abitz said he was “absolutely thrilled” to place second in the national hunting skills competition.

“And I vividly remember the sound of pure joy when the realization hit that we won the sweepstakes,” Abitz said.

Complete results from the national competition are available online.

“It’s been two weeks since they announced that Louisiana placed 2nd (meaning Kansas had placed first) and I still feel the trembling in my fingers, my heart beating and the pure joy I felt at that moment,” said Pawnee County 4-Her Kansas Lange. “I don’t think I’ll ever have that same feeling again.”

Along with the competition, Kansas hosts a team banquet on Monday night of the event. “This allows us to all come together in one place and meet everyone on the team since we are spread out all over the state,” Becker said. “It’s nice for the families to meet and congratulate the kids on the team and wish them the best (of luck) in their competitions.”

Added Lange: “Something I’ll always remember from nationals is the friends I made, the experience of shooting in a competition that tough, and the improvements made during the shooting period. I’ll never forget that feeling of winning the sweepstakes.”

### Sidebar

**Kansas 4-H shooting sports team**

Thirty-six Kansas 4-H members representing 22 counties recently competed in the National 4-H Shooting Sports competition in Grand Island, Neb., winning the state’s first-ever Tom Davison Sweepstakes trophy.

Members of the winning team, by discipline and counties or districts they represent, include:

**Recurve archery** – Paslie Werth (Gray), Natalie Gulick (Johnson), Elsie Smith (Jefferson), Ashley Grotte (Harvey). Coach Arn Eccles.

**Compound archery** – Barrett Pirtle (Greenwood), Wylee Boulanger (Greenwood), Dylon Harris (Frontier District), Nathan Livingston (Frontier District). Coach Brad Boulanger.

**Muzzleloading** – Garland Hanlin (Lyon), Shelby Smith (Wildcat District), Abby Lawrenz (Johnson), Kelly Newton (Wildcat District). Coach Mike (Bluehawk) Adams.

**Small bore pistol** – Becca Adair (Johnson), Evan Kozlowski (Johnson), Landon Pierce (Johnson), Jake Jewers (Clay). Coach Sara Eccles.
Small bore rifle – Garett Dall (Wyandotte), Jace Randall (Phillips-Rooks), Ellie Thul (Sedgwick), Eric Bird (Wyandotte). Coach Tracy Thul.

Shotgun – Logan Thomas (Lyon), Avery Stark (Twin Creeks District), Gunnar Stone (Butler), Dayne Witherspoon (Lyon). Coach Brock Miller.

Air pistol – Bryce Beckman (Riley/Pottawatomie), Kent Deterding (Wyandotte), Kansas Lange (Pawnee), Leah Mueller (Allan). Coach Richard Becker.

Air rifle – Elle Retzlaff (Riley/Pottawatomie), Mkeegan Hoeffner (Haskell), Shakira Cook (Decatur), Rebecca Shleif (Wabaunsee). Coach Robert Retzlaff.

Hunting skills – Logan Schanks (Riley/Pottawatomie), Justin Gerber (Riley/Pottawatomie), Colin Abitz (Riley/Pottawatomie), Henry Bird (Wyandotte). Coach Brandon Gerber.

Complete results from the 2022 National 4-H Shooting Sports contest are available at https://4h.unl.edu/shooting-sports/national.

FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story
Kansas 4-H, https://www.kansas4-h.org

National 4-H Shooting Sports, https://4h.unl.edu/shooting-sports/national

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