

## 2020 Berger Southwest Nationals (SWN)

By Jim Jiao

The 2020 SWN took place again at the Ben Avery Range in Northern Phoenix. As usual, the registration for the matches was sold out within minutes of opening in September of 2019, but some SMGC shooters got on board in the mid-range from the waitlist.

Unlike last year, where the shooters had to endure rain, it was dry this time and very cold (low 30s on Wednesday), but the winds were tricky – either shifting back and forth during shooting strings or on one relay, off the other – so there were some wildly differing results between relays. Unsurprisingly, nobody cleaned the targets in either F-TR or Open divisions, either in Mid- or Long Range.



Because of some late scratches, the SMGC was represented with 10 current or former members and one newly formed mixed Open/TR team competing in the Open class, sponsored by Armstrong Arms Gunsmiths / Fix-It Sticks Tools.



Top SMGC Open Shooter in Mid-Range was Mark Roth (588-27X, overall rank 49/142) and Lou Murdica in Long Range (1220-45, overall rank 76/140), with Mark cleaning one string at 200/15.

Top SMGC TR shooter in Mid-Range was David Cruse (544-8, overall rank 75/86) and Gary Atkinson in Long Range (1183-29, overall rank 78/96).

The newly formed team (Jiao, Cruse, Carver, Thompson) “adopted” Mark Roth from the “A” team, who was orphaned by his usual shooting buddies in the Palma match as we were short Jim Carver that day, who had to tend to work matters on short notice. The adoption paid off, as Mark led the Palma way with a 444-24 and a clean @ 800-yards with 150-11.

The 1000-yard team contest on Saturday was less friendly, with winds shifting left to right and front to back and in opposite directions over the 1000 yards. Yours truly decided to be the only one to shoot from both sides of the wind and would up leading the team in the 1000 with 190-2. Our tribute to the windgods and other assorted Gremlins resulted in a finish of #21 out of 22 teams.

The shot of the contest belonged to me, as I experimented, got greedy on one shot and



dialed the scope all the way up to 55X to get an X rather than a 10, losing the target number in the process. I got the X, but on the target next to me. That shot proved very costly, as it cost me several aggregate placements in the money and I missed jumping from SS to MA classification by 2 points.

Two shooters should get their long-range classifications upgraded to EX, David Cruse and myself.



Saturday saw a barbecue and giveaways of about 100 door prizes valued from \$4000 on the top end downwards and Sunday was the awards ceremony, with Team USA teams and members taking most of the trophies and medals. As usual, the event was smoothly organized by the members of the Tompkins family and the staff of the Desert Sharpshooters and we were able to watch the USA teams in actions to try to carve something useful for ourselves. I do hope they fix the food break situation however; the daily food truck proved to be a bottleneck as

I found myself racing back to the line to shoot or the pit shuttle shoving the remnants of burgers or dogs as fast as I could down my throat. There is also no practice for shooting with indigestion.

The results are no longer found on the Berger Website, the event has now it's own website at [www.southwestnationals.net](http://www.southwestnationals.net), where also results back to 2011 are posted.

Please see the attached spreadsheet for data on the SMGC shooters.

*For those interested and have not been to the "Bergers" as they are known (although Berger Bullets has somewhat scaled back their sponsorship as it seems), the SWN happens every year in early February, when the weather is nice in Northern Phoenix and runs from Tuesday practice to the optional mid-range competition on Wednesday over the team Palma on Thursday to the Long-Range Grand Aggregate from Friday to Sunday. Entry fees range from \$40 to \$175 and registration is on Practiscore in September. Minimum round count if participating in all individual and team events is 250 rounds plus sighters.*

