

2024 America Match by Ray Gross, US Team Captain

The 13th America match was held on September 13, 2024, at the NRA Whittington Center, just outside of Raton, New Mexico. The complex includes a portion of the Sante Fe trail, and the George Tubb 1000 yard range is one of the most scenic ranges in the world.



Scotland and England competed against the US team and competitors from all three countries competed in the Spirit of America (SOA) Fullbore National Championships the week prior to the America match. The Bald Eagles Rifle Club hosted both events.

We knew this America match would be close due to the results of the lead up SOA team events. Additionally, due to injuries and relocation/moving, a few of the top US shooters and coaches were unable to participate in this year's events. Therefore, my sense was that we were slight underdogs going into the match.



The America match is contested by teams of 8 shooters, two line coaches, a main coach, a captain and vice-captain and 2 reserves. Each firer shoots 2 convertible sighters and 15 shots to count at 300, 600, 900, and 1000 yards (or the metric equivalent of 300, 600, 800, and 900 meters). The match was inaugurated in 2002 with the intent to be held every two years and can only take place when an official US team is present and competing.

The 2024 match began with a rocky start for us as we came off the 300 yard line down 9 points to England and 3 to Scotland. We were able to put up a big score at 600 yards and pulled ahead after lunch at the 900 yard line. At 1000 yards, we had another misstep, and the match was put back into question.



The outcome came down to the last shot. England and Scotland had finished about a half hour before we did. As our last shooter, Oliver, prepared for his last shot the wind picked up and changed. We held up with about 30 minutes left on the clock for the match. Behind us, everyone was calculating the team scores to figure out what we had to score on the last shot to win. The word was that we needed at least 8, but that assumed that all the scores had been correctly calculated, so we knew we had to hit the mark to ensure victory. With about 15 minutes left, the coaches thought that the conditions would calm enough to let us take a high percentage shot, but the hard winds rolled back in and we waited some more.

Finally with about 9 minutes left on the clock, the conditions died down enough for us to take the shot. John was coaching Oliver at the time and he rolled the windage on his sight. Oliver set up and settled into position, took the shot and nailed a 10 for the most dramatic finish to an already great match.

In itself, the final shot finish will make this match unforgettable. However, from my perspective as Captain, the even greater and more remarkable accomplishment was that in spite of two missteps, EVERYONE on the team kept their heads down and kept pushing. To me, that is the true mark of a great team and I am proud to have been a part of it!

Special recognition is due to Brian as our head coach. He was on top of the challenging conditions all day and orchestrated both line coaches masterfully. All three coaches (Brian, John, and Russ Theurer) along with Trey and myself helping in the back, worked awesome together, but it was Brian's skill that put the team over the line.



Finally, thanks to our sponsors and organizers for this event! These are [The NRA Foundation](#); [Mudcat's Precision Machine](#), [Manson Precision Reamers](#), the [United States National Rifle Team](#), and the [Bald Eagles Rifle Club](#). Additionally, we would like to thank

other companies who have been long time supporters of our sport: [Berger](#) bullets; [Sierra the Bulletsmiths](#), [VihtaVuori](#) powder; [Lapua](#) brass; [Starline Brass](#); [Brux Barrels, LLC](#); [Bartlein Barrels, Inc.](#); [Krieger Barrels, Inc.](#); [Creedmoor Sports, Inc.](#); [Kowa Optics](#) and [Swarvoski Optik](#) for scopes, spotters, binoculars, rangefinders; [Leofoto](#), and of DB Machine (ladder front sights).