

The USNRT's Voyage to the West Indies Fullbore Championships

A shared passion for competitive shooting brings people together and helps make the world a smaller place. This was certainly the experience for six members of the United States National Rifle Team (USNRT) who traveled to Guyana to compete in the 2024 West Indies Fullbore Shooting Championship (WIFBC) 28 October thru 2 November. This was the first time that the United States had ever competed in these Championships. We had received an invitation while shooting in South Africa at the Target Rifle World Long Range Championships in March.

We learned that thanks to the British, the history and passion for fullbore rifle shooting rivaled our own in America. In fact, the [Guyana National Rifle Association](#) celebrated its 157th anniversary in October as it was established in 1857 by the British Guiana Garrison. The WIFB Council is comprised of rifle associations representing the countries of Antigua & Barbuda, [Barbados](#), Granada, [Guyana](#), [Jamaica](#), and [Trinidad & Tobago](#). The WIFB Championships have been conducted since 1953 with each country taking turns as the host. The rifle associations of these countries are affiliated with that of Great Britain and often send individuals and teams to compete in the Imperial Matches held annually in Bisley, England as well as the Commonwealth Games held around the globe.

Our West Indies Fullbore Championship experience was unlike anything we had experienced before, especially in terms of social events and dignitaries. The president of the Guyana NRA is the head of the



country's defense force so after a practice day on the range, all the teams were hosted at the Officer's Club for a traditional meet and greet. We met both the Prime

Minister, Brigadier (retired) Mark Phillips, and Chief of Defense Staff, Brigadier Omar Khan, and were treated to an excellent performance by the military drum band.

The second social event was the opening ceremonies. These included an introduction of the team members to the President of Guyana, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali; a flag raising ceremony; and official remarks from both the Defense Chief and the President. Finally, the President fired the opening shots from the 300 yard line with a Palma rifle bipod. The President also invited the competitors to be his guest at the Diwali festivities the following evening. This was an unexpected honor, and the teams participated. Diwali is a Hindu celebration and entertainment consisted of parades, fireworks, and eating of curry sauces.



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Back to the primary purpose of our trip, the competition. The Championships were held at the historic Timehri Rifle Range, originally named the Atkinson Range by the American military who built it while stationed there during World War II. Being a fullbore match,



competitors shot two-to-a-mound (two competitors on the same point with firing alternating between them) at 300, 500, 600, 900, and 1000 yards. Also, following international standards, competitors changed firing

points and partners every yard line. An unusual aspect of this range was that the target number boards were three colors, alternating black, red, and gold. The days were quite warm and muggy, it is the tropics after all. Rain forced a cancellation of two long line strings so that along with the electronic targets inconsistently picking up the shots from the long lines – low velocities - resulted in the long line matches getting cancelled. Additional strings were added to the short lines to round out the individual championships.

The United States and Canada only had 6 firing members. The norm for these Championships is 8, so we were unable to field a complete team. However, our Guyanese hosts introduced an “International Match” that ran concurrently with the West Indies Team Championship match. The other countries competed alongside by naming 6 of their firing members as their International team prior to the first shot of the team matches being fired. The final, social event was the awards ceremony which included dinner, exchange of captain’s gifts, and the presentation of awards.

We had a wonderful opportunity to see and experience Guyana, its natural beauty, diverse culture, and friendly people as well as those of the West Indies nations competing alongside us. At the end of the week, a lot of new friends had been made, a



a new country stamp was in our passports, and we had a greater appreciation for the firearm ownership freedoms we have in the United States. The United States National Rifle Team looks forward to fielding a full team at the 2025 West Indies Fullbore Championships being hosted by Barbados in May.

The awards ceremony saw the USNRT being presented the top individual honors as well as winning the International Team Match. Lucas Erwin (South Carolina) creedmoored Yvonne Roberts (Texas) to take the individual championship title. Nate Guernsey (Virginia) and Jerry Iliff (Texas) took third and fourth places respectively. Rounding out the team were Eric Smith (Utah, and US Army Reserve team) and John Coggshall (Connecticut, and US Army Reserve team).



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