



Having a **BLAST**

— Monroe News photos by KIM BRENT

Beretta exhibition shooter Travis Mears is enshrouded by a cloud of smoke as he starts off his demonstration of skills and tricks at the Dundee Sportsman's Club Saturday. Mears wowed the crowd with a variety of shooting tricks.

Trick shooter wows crowd at Dundee Club

■ Travis Mears of Texas combined humor and marksmanship during his show Saturday at the Dundee Sportsman's Club.

BY JEFF MEADE

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DUNDEE — Travis Mears could be called the Magic Johnson of shotgun shooting.

The trick shooter from Team Beretta nailed moving targets shooting behind the back, between the legs and while doing push-ups.

He demonstrated a new way of making dinner by blowing up cauliflower, potatoes, onions, tomatoes, watermelons, the head and body of a pineapple, shaving cream and rolls of toilet papers.

The 26-year-old sharpshooter from Fort Worth, Texas, made a return trip to the Dundee Sportsman's Club Saturday where he worked with youngsters for three hours in the morning, then gave two demonstration shows in the afternoon.

The man who has been featured on ESPN combined humor and marksmanship in his shows. Mears does about 25 shows a year all over the country, mostly on weekends. During the week, he is a landman for a gas company.

Displaying what he called "the key to success in marriage," Mears said as a newlywed he told his wife that he would cook her some dinner. He demonstrated by gunning down the ingredients for salad and Texas salsa, adding, "The moral of the story is I have not had to cook since then."

Using two Beretta XTREME 400 shotguns — each with 12 rounds — Mears promised, "I'm going to make the biggest mess that



A pineapple explodes in mid-air after being shot by Travis Mears during his show at the Dundee Sportsman's Club Saturday.

At left, (left to right) Kylie Horner, 7, of Monroe, family friend Kara Hicks of Monroe and Julie Werstein of Maybee react as a shower of shredded toilet paper floats down from overhead.

Shooter (cont.)

Dundee Sportsman's Club has seen since last year," and did not disappoint.

The shooting exhibitions were presented by the Dundee High School Trap Club and Monroe Pride.

Maggie Dolezal, who co-coaches the Dundee Trap Club along with her husband Joe, said Mears "did a really good job. He's so inspirational."

Ida High sophomore Alex Werstein, 15, was one of the volunteers Mears brought up to assist him during the show.

"I was here last year too," Werstein said. "It's fun. It's a lot of work to do that stuff."

Jeff Hicks of Newport was at the first show along with his 10-year-old son Jordan who nailed 91 of 100 targets in the morning session.

"We love it. We were here last year," Jeff Hicks said. "Travis is a really nice, down-to-earth guy."

Mears invited anyone in the audience to try one of his shotguns after the show and they got a taste of just how hard it is to hit the moving targets. Monroe High junior Kristen Schaff, 16, was one of those who tried her luck. She is a member of the Monroe High School Trap Club.

"It was cool (watching Mears) exploding targets," she said. "I only missed four."

Shooting from the hip, Mears worked his way up from hitting five hand-thrown clay targets before they hit the ground to tying the world record with eight, then shot down nine moving targets.

Using Werstein as a volunteer, Mears threw two moving targets in the air and shot them down with two shells using two different guns.

Next he had four youngsters alternating and throwing a total of 24 eggs in the air at any height in any direction. He nailed all but one.

Turning to sports, Mears displayed a no-return shotgun serve of a tennis ball and shot three lacrosse balls over the trees beyond Dundee Sportsman's Club. He shot three golf balls in different directions to demonstrate a slice, a hook and a drive, "just like Tiger Woods.

"Golfers are like shooters," he said. "They've always got excuses."

At the end of the show he asked the crowd if they had any challenges they would like him to try and performed them flawlessly.

Mears began shooting with his dad at age 9, has been competing since he was 10 and won the gold medal at the ESPN Great Outdoor Games when he was 16. He competes regularly and calls the exhibitions "a good way to share my passion for a large crowd."

He did not stop at Cabela's during his visit to Dundee because he lives just a half-mile from a Cabela's in Fort Worth.

"I spent the morning working with the Dundee trap and skeet team and they shot a lot better than last year," Mears said. "They've matured a lot from last year."