USA Shooting Earns Five Medals In 2024 Olympics

By Brittany Nelson

Vincent Hancock and Austen Smith won silver in Mixed Team Skeet event at the 2024 Olympics in Paris. Hancock also earned a gold medal in Men's Skeet in August.

The U.S. Olympic shooting team brought back five medals and made history at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games at the Chateauroux Shooting Range in France.

Sagen Maddalena, a Groveland, Calif., native, earned the first U.S. medal in shooting with a silver in Women's 50m Smallbore Rifle. In an exciting final, Maddalena, a sergeant in the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit, defeated Qiongyue Zhang, of China, who finished in third place. Maddalena also made the final for Women's 10m Air Rifle and finished fourth.

Vincent Hancock, of Eatonton, Ga., earned the second U.S. shooting medal and made Olympic history. He earned his fourth gold medal in Men's Skeet, becoming the sixth Olympian ever to win four gold medals in the same event, joining Al Oerter (USA, discus), Paul Elvstrom (Denmark, sailing one-person class), Carl Lewis (USA, long jump), Michael Phelps (USA, 200m individual medley) and Mijain Lopez (Cuba, Greco-Roman heavyweight).

He is the first shooting Olympian to accomplish this feat.

Conner Prince of Burleson, Texas, joined Hancock on the podium when he won silver in Men's Skeet. Prince and Hancock's double podium marks the first time the U.S. has earned more than one medal in Men's Skeet at an Olympic Games. The was also the first time more than one U.S. athlete competed in an Olympic Men's Skeet final.

Austen Smith of Keller, Texas, secured her first Olympic medal in Women's Skeet. Smith shot an overall qualification score of 122/125. She tied Amber Rutter of Great Britain in qualifications and then won a 14-point shoot-off, earning herself the number one bib for the final. In the final, Smith bested Vanessa Hockova of Slovakia, who placed fourth.

SCI is an official sponsor of the United States Olympic & Paralympic Shooting Teams Athlete Development and Sports Performance Program and a Gold Level Partner for USA Shooting.

Smith and Hancock paired up to win the fifth and final medal for USA in Mixed Team Skeet. The duo earned silver, falling just short to Italy in the gold medal match. Smith and Hancock were a favorite for a medal as they are the 2023 world champions in the event. The pair makes a dynamic team as Hancock is Smith's coach. Hancock also coaches Prince alongside Smith at the Northlake Shooting Sports in Northlake, Texas, a facility he co-owns.

More history was made in Paris when Katelyn Abeln qualified for the Women's 25m Sport Pistol final. Abeln, of Douglasville, Ga., is the first U.S. woman to ever qualify for an Olympic pistol final. She finished eighth overall.

USA athletes took home 126 medals overall during the games. China won the second most with 91 and Britian won 65.

Brittany Nelson is Shooting USA's public relations manager.

Leadership Training At Legends Ranch

By Chris Everett

More than 35 SCI volunteer leaders took part in Chapter Leadership Training in August at Legends Ranch in Bitely, Michigan.

On the surface, training does not sound fun. It sounds like the old days when we were in school, getting talked to by our teachers about various topics. I can assure that Chapter Leadership Training is anything but that.

To those who were at Legends Ranch in Bitely, Michigan, in August for the Chapter Leadership Training sessions, the time spent was full of laughs, learning and networking. Our group of more than 35 participants learned more about the legal nuts and bolts for each chapter, all things fundraising, as well as best practices for being leaders within our chapters.

The sessions were full of information and great discussion amongst the group. The social activities intertwined in the three days we were there were the icing on the cake.

From observing spectacular wildlife on the grounds to wandering the Wildlife Centre, which has every mount imaginable, nights around the fire and floating down the river on rafts, the comradery within the group built friendships and connections that will help these chapters for years to come.

Overall, for those who have not attended one of the Chapter Leadership Trainings yet, I highly suggest looking into it for next year. Members, Chapters and communities will benefit immensely from it.

Chris Everett is SCI Chapter Services Specialist – Canada.

Claudia Tagliaferri Ricci Named 2025 Diana Award Winner

By Susan Hayes

Claudia Tagliaferri Ricci is a founder of the Italian Chapter of Safari Club International.

The members of the Diana sisterhood are pleased to announce Claudia Tagliaferri Ricci as the winner of the 2025 Safari Club International Diana Award.

Tagliaferri Ricci is a highly experienced huntress who has proven her dedication to the mission of Safari Club International, demonstrated her commitment to superior ethics in the field and shown her unwavering devotion to the pillars of conservation.

We congratulate Claudia on achieving the 2025 Safari Club International Diana Award and praise her again for her exemplary work in the hunting world.

These are a few of Claudia's remarks, which she shared with the Diana selection committee:

My relationship with the world of hunting goes back to the early 1980s. Stefano, my husband, has been hunting since childhood, and since we met, I have known my passion would accompany us all our lives.

I began following him on easy hunts in Europe, and he was able to share with me his emotions, so my passion for hunting was born.

I started shooting birds until, while in Hungary, during the deer rutting season, he gave me his rifle and I got my first trophy. It was a special feeling, a mix of conflict and excitement.

From the traditional hunting parties in Tuscany to the most remote destinations, I have always dreamed of new territories with the spirit of adventure.

After many years, I collected the Big Fives and Grand Slam of North America sheep. Among the animals I have hunted, I rate the bongo of the Central African Republic the most difficult one to collect.

Being a woman, I have always tried to leave places I visited slightly better than how I found them, as my sense of responsibility toward the environment.

In 1986, with a limited number of friends, we decided to establish the Italian Chapter of Safari Club International in Florence, my family's hometown.

A few years later, we started to involve our older son, Niccoló, in our hunts. He was immediately absorbed by the hunting adventure, growing his attitude to live without complaining about the uncomfortable conditions that every hunt may represent.

Filippo, our youngest son, joined us at eight years old and all the family started to travel, sharing the same emotions. Both sons received the Young Hunter Awards from SCI.

Now, they both have their own families, but we still go hunting together, adding to our adventures around the world with our 12-year-old grandson, Stefano Jr.

When I took the rifle in my hands for the first time, I could never have imagined how enriched I would be from the experiences and memories that I jealously keep, emotions shared with my sons, who have become men, and much satisfaction together with my husband, Stefano.

Susan Hayes is Safari Club International Foundation Sables President.