

Mounted Archery Association of the Americas

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[Edition 2, Volume 1]

What's New

MA3 Elections

The Mounted Archery Association of the Americas (MA3) is pleased to announce the results of the 2014 MA3 Board of Directors Election.

Board Members are elected by a vote of the members. Ballots were emailed January 15th to all MA3 Members and were due back by January 25. These individuals will serve in office for 3 years, as their term of

office will be completed with the end of the year conference in 2017. This year you have elected the following individuals to a three year term as members of the Mounted Archery of the Association Board:

Darran Wardle - Oregon
Hilary Hargreaves - Florida
BJ Smith - Arizona

Postal Match Results

2013 Winter Postal Match

We had a great turn out for this match, considering the weather was pretty muddy on this side of the globe.

The South African mounted archers from Griffin's Mounted Archery Center joined us for this match, which is very exciting as this was our first time shooting with them. It was an honor to shoot with them.

Another club new to postal matches, The Aspiring Centaurs from Australia joined us as well for the first time. Matt and Chante Slade along with their wonderful children are an inspirational horseback archery family.

The United States was represented by The Broken Arrow Mounted Archery Club, The Rogue Mounted

Upcoming Mounted Archery Events

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2014 February Postal Match
Hosted by: Griffin's
Mounted Archery Centre,
Western Cape, South Africa
www.horsebackarchery.info

3rd Annual MA3 Bi-Continental Championship
February 21-23, 2014
New Braunfels, TX
Contact: Trey Schlichting
210-860-5353

Rogue Mounted Archers
Lukas Novotny Clinic
June 11-15, 2014
Contact: Darran or Roberta
541-826-8232

RMA International
Competition and Games
September 9-14, 2014
Contact: Darran or Roberta
541-826-8232

If you would like to add an event, please email the information to darransphone@gmail.com

Archers, A Company, and The Desert Warriors of the Southwest. There were a total of 27 competitors for this match. The courses were the Hungarian and the Korean Double/Triple.



1st Place Darran Wardle	2nd Place Daniel Griffin	3rd Place Roberta Beene
145.79 USA	131.43 South Africa	124.27 USA

EOCHA 2013

By Cody Jones



In October a few of us MA3 members had the good fortune to be able to attend the 2013 European Open Championship of Horseback Archers, or “EOCHA” as it is commonly known. You might say the journey was part vacation, part education, and definitely a truly unforgettable experience.

Each year a different European nation hosts the competition; EOCHA 2013 was held in Usak, Turkey, a place with no shortage of

natural beauty and horses. Riding for the USA were Katie Stearns, Ian McLaughlin and myself (Cody Jones), all members of Broken Arrow Mounted Archery club in Washington State.

Shortly after arriving in Istanbul we met up with fellow competitors from South Africa, Hungary, France, and Bulgaria, all good-humored individuals who were clearly passionate about the sport! The talk was mostly of... yes you guessed it... horses and archery! It remained that way for the entire trip.

The next morning we visited a famed master thumb-ring maker who took detailed measurements of our thumbs in order to craft custom rings for us. Afterward we left Istanbul to the competition site. We arrived in Usak ready to eat and rest. The local food didn’t disappoint, and the Municipality of Usak had graciously agreed to

board the competitors in the local university’s athletic dormitory, free of charge. In front of the building a welcome banner showing the EOCHA logo and a picture of a mounted archer had a printed message, “We wish success to the athletes of all countries.”

The next few days were spent at a local equine rescue and rehabilitation facility or “the farm” as our hosts call it. We were bussed there every morning, fed and allowed time with our assigned mounts as they slowly arrived. I was lucky to be given a level-headed dun gelding named Rusan. Radoslaw, the 6’5” Polish cowboy who shared him with me also agreed that he was a “good pony.” Later I was told they rarely geld here, doing so only in extreme circumstances. I took this to mean that Rusan was once an *extreme* terror, though nowadays he’s a sweetheart. The rest of the

horses used in the competition were Arabian stallions, with no mares allowed. Apparently this is a safety measure and not an act of gender discrimination.

Downtime at the farm was spent shooting arrows. I loved seeing the various shooting and nocking techniques and considered this time a valuable extended archery lesson. Notably, every single archer, despite the fact that they would be directly competing with each other, was happy to share their personal techniques, and many openly coached one another. It is this spirit of camaraderie that I love about horse-archery and traditional archery. I don't think you'd find competitors so willing to share their trade secrets with each other in an Olympic village, or even a modern archery competition.

The day before the competition we were finally shown the grounds and the site was absolutely breathtaking. The main track was nestled into a hillside with plenty of space for spectators and a panoramic view of the surrounding landscape. Just below this the 400-meter Polish track,

recently carved into the slope, wound its way through a sparse pine forest. From a bluff above it the audience would be able to see all the action.

After a short time at the site we were ushered off to take part in the city's holiday parade, some of us on foot with the rested mounted in full costume. Katie carried the flag for USA while the flags of sixteen other nations flew behind and ahead of her in the EOCHA section of the cavalcade. Locals turned out in the thousands, lining the streets, watching and taking pictures.

After the parade we continued on through town to the rescue barn where a special presentation had been prepared for us. We were treated to a demonstration of Cirit, the most popular sport in Turkey. Cirit is a high-speed mounted game wherein opposing teams charge and chase each other on horseback throwing sticks at one another in a simulated spear toss. After the demo a crowd, which included the mayor of Usak, still remained, so someone produced a target and a spontaneous mounted archery demo broke out

which was quite the crowd pleaser as well as good practice for the following day's competition.

On the first day of the tournament I wasn't scheduled to ride but luckily had been warned to expect the unexpected and came prepared with all my gear. I ended up riding of course. Last minute schedule changes were the norm in an otherwise relatively smoothly run competition.



At EOCHA there were four courses, Korean, Hungarian, Polish, and this one included "Turkish style," a qabaq with a twist. Competitors chose only 3 of the four to run in so I opted out of the Turkish, doubting my ability to lean over the side of the cantering horse and pluck the flu-flu arrow from the ground.

I was however especially excited to try myself on a Polish track for the first time. This was the course people

seemed to have the most fun on and afterward I vowed to build one at home. (still under construction but when complete you are *all* invited to try it.

I was also excited for the Korean as I'd never run on a 150-meter track. The Korean triple shot was run a bit different than what I was used to. Instead of three side shots, probably figuring that there were enough side shots in the serial-run, they mix up the triple by including a long front-shot and an offside ground-shot, which added a degree of difficulty that I found challenging and fun.



Katie Stearns

After three days of intense riding and shooting the competition drew to a close and the mood quickly became celebratory. The last event had been the Turkish and since the qabaq pole was still up, riders were invited to give the audience a show. Cemal Hunal, a mounted archer and Turkish movie star thrilled spectators by hitting the qabaq at high speed in the traditional style while some of the horse handlers cracked

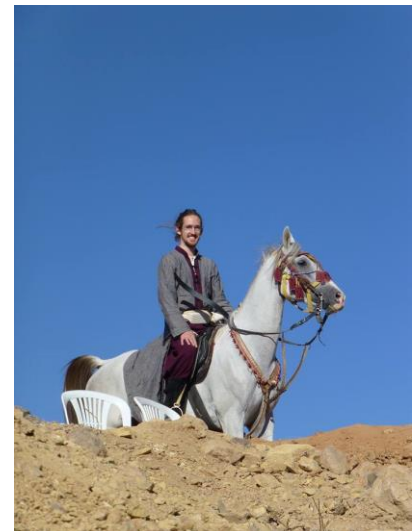
bullwhips and showed off their Cossack vaulting, or *dzhigitovka* skills. At some point one of the organizers announced into the microphone that Katie Stearns would be shooting targets from the back of a speeding motorcycle. Though surprised by the request, Katie, always a good sport obliged them to the delight of the audience and mayor. Immediately after this was the closing ceremony. Gold, silver, and bronze medals were awarded for each course but it was Mathyas Ruzsak of Hungary who took the title of overall champion while also winning the Korean style and placing third in the Hun.

The most notable aspect of the journey to me was this: I mentioned previously how mounted-archery, though a competitive sport, has a way of inspiring people to share their experiences, techniques, stories and secrets. Those who do it, love it, and love talking about it. Bows, horses, technique, riding, craft, costumes, history... there's really a lot to "nerd out" about, and a ton of knowledge to share. And when you put horse-archers together in a room, barn, or a field they're going to do just that. Add the international element into the mix and you have something wonderful happening, and

that's people from many corners of the world, perhaps with differing political or religious beliefs, maybe even with governments on not-so-friendly terms, coming together, helping each other and forging bonds in the spirit of goodwill, healthy competition, and betterment of the self through our sport.

Happy shooting!

-Cody



Ian McLaughlin

"The Superior Man has nothing to compete for. But if he must compete, he does it in an archery match." - Confucius