

Makin' A Break For Cystic Fibrosis

By Charles Strohmer

It wasn't the trophies and giveaways that drew shooters to this charity event that benefited cystic fibrosis research.

We're here to help the kids," said Mike Redmond, a Tennessee champion shooter attending the fifth annual Vulcan Materials Make A Break Thru For Cystic Fibrosis sporting clays charity event April 27-28 at the Chilhowee Sportsmen's Club near Maryville, Tennessee, in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains. "I love the sport. I shoot between 75,000-100,000 targets a year, but this is one of the best charity tournaments I'll go to this year."

"When we shoot, we shoot hard, and we're competitive," said Dwayne Marcum. "But at the end of the day, it's not the scores, it's the tournament's purpose that matters."

"This tournament has become part of our lifestyle now," said Steve Seay, whose Seay Oil Company is a sponsor. "I bring my son, Tom, who's 8 this year. He shot the whole course today, shot a 45."

The two-day event drew almost 400 shooters and raised \$120,000 to fight Cystic Fibrosis. "It amazes me how fast this tournament has grown," said Jim Deanda, the founder of Cure Finders, the nonprofit organization behind the event. Cystic fibrosis is a genetic lung and digestive disease affecting 35,000 adults and children in the US, reducing life expectancy. Only a decade ago, life expectancy for CF sufferers was 18 years. Today, it's 35.

"Research is the key," said Deanda, who has two children, Callie and Cale, suffering from CF. "The past 10 years, we've seen breakthroughs in medicines and



Tom Seay, 8, settles into the stock as he picks up a pair of incomers on station seven.

treatments. That's increasing life spans and getting more and more people jazzed about a cure, which researchers believe is attainable. I think that's why we keep adding sponsors and shooters to this event every year. People find out what's going on and want to help." Founded in 2001 by Deanda and his wife Barbara, Cure Finders is dedicated solely to discovering the cure and has to date raised a half million dollars toward that goal through its annual charity events.

Mickey Burns, owner of Chilhowee Sportsmen's Club, which covers 118 acres of hilly terrain with a lot of woods, showed shooters—from rookies to veteran All-Americans—some clever target presentations. The "Witch in the Ditch," a true pair thrown downhill, closely following the terrain along a narrow path cut through some tough Tennessee underbrush, outsmarted many. You shot it fast or not at all. Most competitors broke just one.

The overall average for the tournament was 57.1, soft on some stands, but not so soft

that the course didn't challenge the top guns. Mike Redmond bested All-American Jim Williams and two-time Kentucky State champion Mark Hall by one target for HOA honors. Top team honors went to Williams, Richard Stoffle, Doug Kovacs, Hall, and Dwayne Marcum with 471.

Nearly 80 volunteers worked to make the two-day event a well-run success. "We're happy to be here," said Bob Stalkhe, one of the volunteer managers. "It's been a great two days in the outdoors. The Lord's blessed us. Couldn't ask for anything more." A prime rib lunch was provided by PGF Hale, with Food City supplying all the fixings. Sponsors include Vulcan Materials, Remco Construction, Bridgestone Firestone, Stowers Machinery, Industrial Fabrication, Keith Trucking, TEMA-Issermann, and many others, including Jerry Floyd's Golf & Guns, which provided a dozen discs and shotgun giveaways.

For info about next year's tournament or to find out more about the Cure Finders' fight against Cystic Fibrosis, contact www.curefinders.org or email bob@cswe.net.

