

THE

# MAC ATTACK

BY BRAD MARTIN

In 2016 Mac Mabry entered the Archery Shooters Association (ASA) 3-D archery scene with authority. He had shot a few of the local shoots in previous years and performed really well, but the ASA Pro/Am's are a totally different ballgame. It's not uncommon for there to be 2,000 competitors at a national event. That didn't scare Mac. Not only did it not deter him, he decided to jump into one of the "Big Boy" classes right off the bat. Most competitors shoot in one of the novice classes for their debut on the national scene, but Mac decided Open A was for him. Open A is a 50 yard, all unknown class, just like the Pro's shoot. It is one step below the Semi-Pro class.

His first ASA tournament was February, 2016 in Foley, Alabama. That was my debut in the Open A class as well and the targets were stretched out. We didn't get to set our sight under 40 yards but a couple of times all weekend. It was a very challenging range and Mac proved that he could shoot regardless of the stage on which he was performing. He placed 9th in that debut event and hasn't slacked up since. Metropolis, Illinois was the next ASA Pro/Am that Mac was able to attend and again, he shot really well and finished the





tournament in 8th place. The state championships rolled around and Mac brought home the championship buckles in both Louisiana and Alabama as well as winning the gold medal in the State Games of Mississippi. The only remaining ASA tournament on the Pro/Am schedule was the ASA Classic, the world championship. And yet again, Mac shot really well. Although this time he slipped a little bit and finished in 12th place. Top 15 is still very respectable in such a competitive class, but Mac was definitely not satisfied. That lit a fire under Mac that the rest of us Open A shooters have had to endure the heat from throughout the 2017 season.

With the 2016 tournament season over, Mac transitioned from shooting “rubber deers” to the real thing. And the Mississippi delta whitetails felt

the wrath of his honed shooting skills. Mac added several does to the freezer for the wonderful table fare that they provide, but also to do his part of herd management. The countless hours of practicing for the tournaments paid great dividends for shooting under pressure. On three different occasions throughout the season Mac had fantastic bucks present shot opportunities and on all three occasions, great Mississippi whitetails hit the dirt after short bloodtrails. The three bucks scored 163”, 157” and 148”. A one year total of 468 inches of antler on wild, Mississippi bucks is almost unbelievable. But to do it with a bow, makes it even more impressive.

With the phenomenal deer season that Mac had, we all assumed that he spent most of the winter in the deer stand and not on the practice range.

But with the opening tournament in Foley, AL, we quickly learned that he had either been practicing all winter, or he has an unbelievable God given talent to shoot a bow. I’m not sure which is the case, but either way, Mac started the season by stomping on the gas pedal and hasn’t let up since. Within the ASA once a shooter wins a certain amount of money and has a top 5 or two top 10 finishes for the season, they are required to “move up” to a more difficult class. Mac started the season with aspirations of winning out of the Open A class and possibly make a run for Shooter of the Year (SOY). In Foley he finished 5th with a score of 410, or “10 up” on a 40 target range, which made for a good start on both of his season goals.

The second tournament of the year was held in Ft. Benning, Georgia and

he really wanted to get on the podium. In typical Mac fashion, when it was time to get on the podium, he just jumps right up on top of it. He won the tournament with a score of 18 up, a 4 pt lead over the nearest competitor. This win also put Mac in the lead for the SOY. The next tournament on the trail had us headed west to Paris, Texas and again Mac finished in the top 5. He placed 4th with a score of 406. Mac and I are always joking around, and I have jokingly told him on several occasions that I was going to beat him in one of these tournaments even if it meant that I had to cut his bowstring halfway through the second day. Sometimes it feels like that is the only way I could beat him.

At this point we had shot 3 tournaments and Mac placed in the top 5 of all three. Goal #1 was complete. He had won enough money so that ASA would be inviting him to shoot in a more difficult class. At this point there are only 3 classes left for him to choose from Semi-Pro, Open Pro or Known Pro. And at this point he still hasn't made up his mind.

The forth stop on the tournament trail was Augusta, Georgia. We don't want to talk about Augusta. Everyone is entitled to a bad weekend. I accused him of throwing the shoot just so I wouldn't cut his bowstring. But whatever gremlin Mac was dealing with in Augusta, he has definitely remedied the problem. The next two ASA shoots were in London, Kentucky and Metropolis, Illinois and Mac decided it would be a good idea to win both of those. He shot 26 up in London and only one other shooter was within 10 points of his score. However, in Metropolis, he didn't want anyone that close to him. So he figured a score 438 should do the trick. And it did! The 2nd place shooter shot 418, so Mac had a 20

point lead at the end of the tournament. He could have completely missed 2 targets and still won on 12 count.

The 2017 ASA State Championships rolled around and it was no surprise that Mac brought home the championship buckles for Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama in three consecutive weekends. And I believe he may have heard a few more threats to his bowstring. He also again brought home the gold medal in the State Games of Mississippi.

Going into the ASA Classic in Cullman, Alabama, Mac was well on his way to completing his 2nd goal of Shooter of the Year. He was leading the chase with a 33 point advantage over the 2nd place contender. And going into the Classic, things were stacking up where I was afraid he was going to need the cushion. Mac started having issues with the bearings in his cams on his bow. He ordered new cams and patiently awaited their arrival. As the days clicked by and the cams didn't show up, Mac began to get a little nervous. With a week before the tournament, he still didn't have the cams. Wednesday of the week of the tournament and the cams were still "scheduled for delivery". Nervous probably wouldn't be the right descriptor for Mac at the time. Full-fledged panic would probably fit the situation better. He did get the cams, at 6:00 pm on Thursday and the emergency bow rebuild began. He put it all together, in his terms, "good enough" and left for Alabama. Oh, and just to make the challenge a little more interesting, Mac picked a perfect time to contract pink eye. He showed up to the shoot on Friday and could barely open his eyes.

The top 4 shooters in the SOY standings were peer grouped on the first stake, so the pressure was on.

Luckily, the pink eye had cleared a little and Mac was at least able to open both eyes. At the end of the first day Mac was leading his peer group, but not in the lead for the tournament. He was sitting in third place, with the first and second place shooters only leading by 3 points. But that lead didn't last long. They say in ASA that you have to put two good days together, and that is a lot easier said than done. But not for Mac. He has a unique ability to not get flustered by the pressure and usually does manage to put two good, or great, days together. Mac will be the first to tell you that he did not have his best rounds in the Classic. I can tell you that the ranges that we shot were brutal. They were long and deceiving to judge. And although Mac didn't shoot great rounds, he did shoot better than everyone else in the Open A class and pulled out his third consecutive win. This also meant that he slammed the door on the other competitors for Shooter of the Year and successfully completed his second goal for the year. To say Mac had a great year on the 3-D Tournament Trail is a gross understatement. He had an unbelievable year! And according to Mac, now it is time to "shoot something that bleeds".

Throughout this article we have focused on Mac's shooting ability and the tournaments that he has won. But if you talked to Mac, that is the last thing that you would hear about. If you talk to Mac, you will hear a deer story of two or you will hear about his two precious daughters. Mac is just a good ole country boy that loves hunting and fishing and absolutely adores his wife, Julie, and their beautiful daughters. He just has an uncanny ability to shoot a bow that makes the rest of us jealous.