

Trapshooter Mullins 3rd at U.S. Trials

By George Edgar

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South Kitsap graduate John Mullins won the U.S. national title in July and placed third at the recent U.S. world championship team trials in Texas. PHOTO COURTESY THE MULLINS FAMILY

Port Orchard trapshooter has his eye on an Olympic berth in 2012.

Each time Jon Mullins aims his weapon, his target is very clear — London.

The 2006 graduate from South Kitsap won the U.S. National championship in trap shooting in July in Colorado Springs, Colo., where he currently resides and is attending school, and finished third in the U.S. Trials for the world championships last weekend in Kerrville, Texas.

“I didn’t shoot quite as well as I hoped but I still made the team,” he said.

The top three will represent the U.S. during the World Cup circuit, which begins in March in Munich, Germany.

Dominic Grazioli, the greybeard of the team at age 45, and fellow Washingtonian Jacob Turner from Richland, finished 1-2 at the U.S. trials.

Mullins, 22, edged Turner, 20, for top honors at nationals.

Mullins placed third place at the U.S. trials in 2008, missing out on the Beijing Olympics. He was an alternate, behind Bret Erickson and Grazioli.

“One clay target away,” he said.

He has been hitting a lot of targets since moving down to Colorado Springs, where he attends a branch campus of the University of Colorado, pursuing his degree in mechanical engineering. Before moving to Colorado, Mullins earned his AA degree at Olympic College.

Mullins' parents, Tim and Linda, were both competitive shooters, and he has been shooting at targets since he was seven. He won a junior national championship in trap shooting when he was 10.

Trap shooting consists of shooting once at a clay target that is launched in the air going away from the shooter. In international competition, you get two shots to hit the target.

When he's home, Mullins usually shoots at the Gig Harbor Sportsman Club, the Bremerton Trap and Skeet Range near the Bremerton Airport, or the Poulsbo Sportsman Club.

A typical day will consist of five to eight hours on the range at the U.S. Olympic Training Center. He attends classes in the morning from Monday to Thursday, and trains in the afternoon. The decision to move to Colorado Springs was a no-brainer.

“The center range is open five, six days a week,” Mullins says. “There's no restrictions in training.”

The World Cup won't be his first international competition, having competed in Italy, Germany, Croatia, China, San Marino and Canada.

When he gets some down time, Mullins likes to go hunting, and plans to do some when deer and elk season begins. But getting to London for the 2012 Olympics remains his focus.

He was an alternate in 2008 and competed in the test event at Beijing, but that experience only pushes him in his training and competition.

“London is the goal,” he says. “I think of the Olympic Trials last year. As it draws towards London, I know I was so close.”