

# Mason Dixon Clay Busters hit their targets

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Reporter/Columnist

Students in the Mason Dixon Clay Busters club are used to setting their sights higher than they can reach—only usually at flying clay pigeons.

Roger Beardsley is the leader of the club; it is a youth target shotgun team that was created under the Scholastic Clay Target Program with programs for kids in grades 6-12.

"It's a great program that over the years has expanded from three kids to over 30 in a couple of years" said Beardsley.

The types of clay shooting the MDCS participate in are: trap, skeet, and sport-ing clays.

Trap shooting, according to Mr. Beardsley, is the club's biggest strength because it directly relates to pheasant hunting which is very popular in this area.

"In trap, the clay target is launched away from the shooter and they have about a split second to react to eliminate the target," said Beardsley.

Most people can imagine the classic line "pull" as the target is launched, and the shooter hits the target.

Another type of shooting is Skeet,

similar to duck hunting in a river.

Two targets on each side of the shooter are launched going across from the shooter one is high, and one is low" according to Beardsley.

Resembling how a golf course is set up, sport shooting has twenty or more stations in which targets are launched in the air, stationary, or rolling on the ground, testing the marksmanship of the shooter while simulating hunting with animal like behaviors.

Also enjoying the competitive nature of the sport, Biology teacher Ed Bailey, has his two children in the program.

"Being in the program is a wonderful time that we spend together because clay shooting is a lifelong activity," said Bailey.

The club itself is more than just a group of people that get together and shoot guns; they are an extremely competitive group of marksmen.

The club practices in the spring, and its season runs from March to early June where they compete against local teams.

After the regular season is over in June, state competition begins and last the whole month.

National competitions are after states and are hosted in Illinois where more

than 15,000 kids come to compete.

Last year for the Clay Busters, the group placed second in trap shooting in states. In nationals, they placed 25th overall out of about 180 teams.

Sophomore Beardsley is the club's leader's son and has been in many competitions for the club.

"The competitions are exciting but nerve wrecking at clutch times, but its great being with him doing something we love together," said Mark Beardsley.

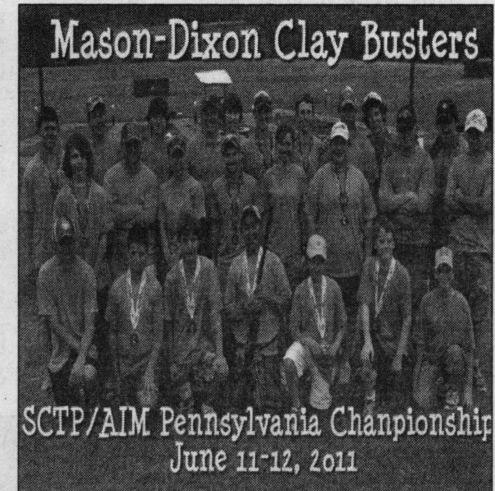
Though the club is very competitive, they do encourage others to join, especially students who are new to shooting.

The club itself has certified coaches on hand that will teach anyone how to accurately fire your weapon.

The club is well organized and stresses gun safety, it's one of the first things advertised on their website "Be safe, have fun, shoot well."

They practice their trap shooting at the Jefferson Sports association, and at the Isaac Walton Youth league, where they practice on a shooting range.

Mr. Beardsley encourages all who are interested about learning to shoot or competing, to contact him through the club's website, [masondixonclaybusters.com](http://masondixonclaybusters.com).



*Photo provided by Mason Dixon Clay Busters*

**Bustin' Clay:** The Mason-Dixon Clay Busters, a competitive clay-shooting group that offers programs for kids from kindergarten to high school, placed 25th out of 180 groups in trap shooting during a national competition. Biology teacher Ed Bailey is involved in the Clay Busters and also has both of his children in the program. He thinks that it is a fantastic way for the family to spend time together.