

GM Tips

CONVERSATIONS WITH USPSA'S TOP GUNS

This is the second part to the discussion Mike and I had after the L10 Nationals. Mike Seeklander (mikeseeklander@uss shootingacademy.com) serves as the Chief Operations Officer at the United States Shooting Academy in Tulsa, Okla. The USSA has been the site of a couple USPSA National Matches, including the 2007 USPSA Limited, Production, and Revolver Nationals.

Match Mentality better known as "Controlled Chaos"

Mike relates a recent discussion he had with The Great One, Rob Leatham. Rob's point was to train in a way that mimicked matches. That is to find out our limitations and expand those limits. The phrase "Perfect Practice" has been used repeatedly in our sport. Mike suggests this does not mean everything is slow, controlled, and repeatable, and comfortable. It means that training must be consciously designed with a goal or goals in mind, and then the training sessions are executed perfectly.



Photo by Robin Taylor, USPSA Staff
Seeklander splashing through the mud at the LPR Nationals.

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If you are learning a new skill or aspect of the game, it is most important to get the mechanics perfect! This prevents training scars, which will have to be removed later. This is time to be in total control. This is called Skill Development.

These two paragraphs may seem like they are present diametrically opposed concepts but in reality they are not. Learning a new skill, like shooting on the move, requires time for it to be programmed into our subconscious. However, once the skill is programmed into our subconscious our training should take a different turn. It now becomes Controlled Chaos.

How many times have we heard the B class (and below) shooter say they had a plan until the buzzer went off? Once the buzzer goes off, we sometimes forget how we were going to shoot the stage and somehow just stumble through it; sometimes with good results and sometimes with bad results. This is a result of the shooter not properly preparing for the match.

Mike calls the big matches Controlled Chaos. If we expect to perform well in the controlled chaos environment, then we train in controlled, uncomfortable chaotic settings with drills and speed that push our limits. Mike states, "We must push ourselves to our limits and beyond." He is suggesting understanding those limits or stress levels and "hang it out on the edge" during some of the training sessions. Mike strongly emphasizes that this does not mean to train out of control, just find your limits of what out of control means to you as an individual shooter. Make things twice as hard in practice, and EXPECT yourself to perform well even through the hard shots. Make yourself go through a proper firing cycle.

Controlled Chaos, Skill Development, and Match Practice.

As stated previously;

- Controlled Chaos finds and pushes the individual shooter's limits.
- Skill Development is a slower ver-

sion of controlled chaos. The key is to perform in control and be consciously aware of how it feels. The goal is not to accept anything but excellence. Remember, your unconscious mind is learning its skill program now.

- Finally, for Match Practice use your local matches as a practice session for your Area or National matches. Take notes on what you felt during each stage of these smaller matches.

Mike's Summary

New Shooters

- Learn Control First -- Speed will Follow
- Learn Proper Mechanics
- Learn the Proper Firing Cycle
- Build the Proper Skill Program - Conscious effort to Unconscious execution
- Accept operating in Chaos

Experienced Shooters

- Accept you may have traveled down the wrong path

- Re-learn the proper mechanics
- Re-learn the Proper Firing Cycle
- Build a Proper Skill Program to replace the any bad programs (Scars)
- Stop looking for a comfort zone in a big match, it does not exist
- Learn to find control in Chaos

As Rob Leatham said, "you can not fool yourself..." when you are in a big match and expect to excel. The only way you are going to excel in big matches is to treat every match as a big match. You need to engineer your practice sessions around the concept of controlled chaos.

Accept that we can not replicate a match in practice; we must prepare ourselves to the best of our ability, and accept that we will be uncomfortable (nervous/feel stress) during the match. Accept it and you will operate in it much better

If you have any questions or suggestions, you can contact me at pjben-son45@aol.com.



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