NJCAA® CLAY TARGET

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Background

December 2016: The USA Clay Target League (USA) received an email inquiry regarding starting a college clay target league for the Minnesota College Athletic Conference (MCAC) from Pete Watkins - Executive Director. The MCAC (Region 13) is a member of the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA). The Minnesota State High School Clay Target League (via USA) was Minnesota's fastest-growing high school sport and the MCAC was exploring adding an emerging sport that would recruit and retain student athletes and other two-year colleges.

Fall 2017: A handful of MCAC member schools conducted recreational clay target (trap shooting) competitions to measure the level of interest.

Spring 2018: MCAC Executive Committee voted at the MCAC General Assembly to add clay target as a varsity sport in Fall 2018 through a partnership with USA Clay Target League.

Fall 2018: Meeting including Dr. Chris Parker - President and CEO, NJCAA, John Nelson - President - USA, and Pete Watkins reviewed clay target as a potential consideration as a varsity sport for NJCAA.

Spring 2019: John Nelson presented clay target at the NJCAA Leadership Institute.

Fall 2019: MCAC's second clay target season experienced dramatic participation increases in student athletes, teams, and new member schools. NJCAA sends clay target survey to members to solicit interest.

NJCAA Mission And Objectives

The mission of the NJCAA Foundation is to enhance the NJCAA national organization, student-athletes, member colleges and local communities through financial support, scholarships, program initiatives and community service.

- Supporting the creation, growth and sustainability of two-year college athletic programs.
- Providing funding for scholarships, community programs and national awards.
- Telling the story of the NJCAA and increasing the exposure of two-year collegiate athletics.
- Promoting diversity, equity and inclusion growth for all colleges and student-athletes.
- Fostering character in student-athletes through fair, consistent rules and play.
- Prepare students to further their education or workforce readiness.
- Providing the necessary resources for technology upgrades, organization operations and opportunities for student-athletes through the NJCAA.

About USA Clay Target League

The USA Clay Target League is a non-profit corporation and the independent provider of clay target shooting sports as an extracurricular co-ed and adaptive activity for secondary and postsecondary schools. The League's priority are safety, fun, and marksmanship – in that order.

Beliefs:

- Safe and responsible handling and storage of firearms and ammunition is the first priority.
- Everyone should have fun.
- Participation is a privilege and not a right.
- Sportsmanship needs to have a constant presence.
- Students should have an equal opportunity to participate.
- Ethical behavior, dignity and respect are expected.
- Participants will be chemically free.
- Collaborative relationships with schools and students create a positive experience.
- Academic priorities must come before participation.
- Adults must serve as a positive role model to students.
- The success of the team is more important than individual honors.
- Gun clubs are critical to the success of the League and are positive business leaders in their community.
- Compliance with school, community, gun club and League rules are essential for all participants.
- Shooting sports strengthens connections within families and communities for life.
- Everything the League does will always be in the best interest of the students.

One of the fastest-growing high school sports:
- States: 1 (2008), 25 (2019)
- Teams: 3 (2008), 1,042 (2019)
- Student athletes: 30 (2008), 35,000 (2019)
- Coaches: 3 (2008), 8,500 (2019)

Safety:
- League-approved firearm safety certification is required for all student athletes.
- All coaches are approved by the school and most coaches are safety certified.
- Range Safety Officers are required to monitor the fields during shooting.
- Hearing and eye protection are required.
- Stringent League policies and procedures.
- All shooting ranges have published safety policies.
- Waiver and consent, sportsmanship, privacy policy, and medical agreements are required for registration.
- Accident insurance for registered student athletes is provided at no additional cost.
- Safe Sport Policy allows access for athletes to report and eliminate various misconducts.
- Since 2008 – 125,000+ athletes, 58 million+ shots fired, 0 reported injuries.

Features:
- ClayTargetGo!™ is the custom-designed online sports management application for student athletes and coaches.
- True Team® scoring allows all student athletes on a team an opportunity to contribute to a team's score.
- Shooter Performance Tracker® allows student athletes to view weekly statistics and rankings.
- Clay Target Leaderboard is the tournament application for scoring and statistics.
- Coach "CLASS" Certification provides comprehensive online "Coach Leadership And Safety Support" training designed for League participants.
- Athlete "SAFE" Certification provides comprehensive online "Student Athlete Firearm Education" training designed for League participants.
- Preferred vendor of the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association.

Minnesota College Athletic Conference Clay Target (2018-Present)

Objectives:
- Recruit students
- Retain students
- Recruit school membership
- Acquire non-traditional sponsors
- Expand brand awareness

Student recruitment benefits:
- Major factor to draw from local and regional areas with strong youth shooting sport presence.
- Synergy and cross-pollination with gunsmithing, wildlife/conservation/law enforcement and other related majors.
- Built-in recruiting with high school and college clay target coaches typically being the same person.
- Some faculty members are coaches.
- Clay target sport is growing while other sports are stagnant or not offered.
- Large high school state tournament is recruiting opportunity.
- Increasing two-sport participation.

Member college benefits:
- Students take more classes to be eligible to compete.
- Local shooting ranges become "boosters" supporting with staff and low costs.
- Very limited travel to local range reduces school costs.
- Flexibility in team size – smallest 6, largest 40.
- Equal opportunity in one sport – physically-challenged, male and female, same team.
- Corporate support interest was nearly double as more traditional sports.
- Very little conflict and low residual costs than other fall sports.
- Widespread athlete recognition.

Region benefits:
- Current member schools expanding sport offering.
- Attracted four non-intercollegiate athletic program schools to join.
- School moved PT faculty to FT faculty with increased duties.
- Increased marketing and publicity opportunities and added outdoor sport avenues.
- Expanded reach to potential schools in neighboring states.
- High level of ROI opened discussions for considering other sports (bowling, soccer, hockey).
- Turnkey, ready-made reputable program.

Season:
- Coaches provided access to ClayTargetGo! to build rosters and invite students to register.
- Students receive invitation and register through ClayTargetGo!
- Schedule:
  - Registration: Late-August through early-September
  - Practice/Reserve Week: mid-September
  - Championship registration: September
  - Competition Weeks: 5 through mid-October
  - Championship: Late-October at designated shooting range
- Conferences are determined by number of members of team.
- Virtual competition requires travel to local shooting range only.
- Championship invites everyone and they compete in different skill classifications based on season average.
- Costs:
  - $35 per student athlete registration fee to USA.
  - $500 per school registration fee to USA.
  - $100 per student athlete registration fee (targets, ammunition, food) for Championship to shooting range.
  - Each team manages costs for ammunition, targets, and gear.
- USA developed and administered alternative replica website to host news, rosters, statistics and standings.
- Sports code developed from USA's policies and procedures.
- Clay target committee included USA representatives.

2019 participation:
- Student athletes: 275 (81% increase from 2018)
- Teams: 12 (33% increase from 2018)
- Championship participants: 221 (53% increase from 2018)
- Reported injuries: 0

NJCAA Clay Target

Objectives:
- Recruit additional Regions for Fall 2020 season.
  - Contact key Regions in areas where high school clay target league has a high number of participants
  - Obtain commitments from Region's member schools.
  - Create dedicated clay target website for emerging sport similar to eSports https://njcaae.leaguespot.gg/league.
  - Estimated participation:
    - Region 13: 350 student athletes, 14 teams
    - Other Regions: 200 student athletes, 14 teams
- Implement Fall 2021 season nationwide.
  - Develop and deploy strategic plan.
    - Define objectives, strategies, and tactics.
    - Convert clay target website (Region) to NJCAA brand.
    - Add qualifying National Championship.

Questions

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