



By Robin Taylor, asi-usa.org

It's been said that the "gun of a master" is a snub-nose revolver. Until you learn to shoot one/fight with one, carrying a snubie sounds crazy, but those little guns have a lot going for them in the right hands. Of course bigger guns are better in a gunfight for many reasons, but you'll find plenty of the tactical instructor set carrying tiny little guns. The guns are small, yes, but they're hardly "unarmed."

As I've told students, snubbies are basically a gun and a pair of brass knuckles all rolled into one. They're supremely nasty at roll-around-on-the-ground distances. At first blush, shooting a snubby or a subcompact seems incredibly difficult – but the more you train with one, the more accurate they become. Mechanically they'll put the bullets where you want 'em – you just have to have the skills to put them there.

And there's the problem. For most of my life I've shot full-size guns, yet I've carried subcompacts. Even a GLOCK 19 "prints" on my skinny waist. At the same time, I'm an enthusiastic USPSA/Steel Challenge pistol competitor, where shooting a subcompact would put me at a laughable disadvantage. So why am I suddenly dragging my little guns to local shoots?

Action Shooting International (ASI) de-emphasizes the competitive part of "competitive shooting" and simplifies the rules. Doing that took the ego craziness out and let cool everyday gear in – stuff you would NEVER see at an athletic shooting event. The rules are designed to make it possible for "shorty" owners to participate and succeed. The biggest stages are only 12 shots long, so most everyone only reloads once per stage. Most every stage has a required reload, but you can reload anywhere between the first and last shot. Because of the reload, big magazines don't give you an advantage. Ammo power doesn't matter (shoot a .380 if you want), and the targets are close. Basically the only thing you can't use is a frame-mounted scope and barrel-mounted compensator. Because of that, people roll out everything from GLOCK .45s to Browning Hi-Powers to the Ruger LCR.

Shooting ASI for fun opened a way for me to shoot my "shorty" in a way I never would have done on my own – and now I'm MUCH more proficient with it.

Short Guns Are What We Really Use

I love purpose-built match guns. They make even the humblest shooter faster and more accurate. They're awesome on the range but make LITTLE sense in the real world. As a result there are thousands of skilled

competitive shooters (like me) who shoot a sexy “range queen” on the weekends, but the gun they actually need, they rarely shoot!

ASI’s culture opens the door for high-volume shooters like **Blue Press** readers to use/train with whatever they want (including their .380 and .32 caliber carry guns). We’ve seen shooter after shooter bring out their carry guns and shoot them in a dynamic environment for the first time. They try combinations that aren’t “legal” in the eyes of other sports (using projected lasers, lightened slides, flashlights) and they learn stuff as a result.

In my case, shooting the GLOCK 26 that I carry more or less daily opened my eyes. Since choosing to shoot the 26 in ASI, I’ve learned new ways to reload, new ways to draw, and learned a lot about how quickly I can engage targets with different-size guns. I still manage to win now and then (not that anyone really cares), but I’m living proof you don’t need to run out and buy an expensive blaster to shoot ASI.

Gray Guns’ Jordan Castro ranks among the top 100 or so Steel Challenge shooters in the world. He would be bored shooting a typical ASI match with his match gun. Notice, I said “with his match gun.”

Instead, Castro brought his GLOCK 43 when he came to the range with me. The 43 is a great little gun, with the emphasis on LITTLE. Castro had shot the gun a bit at the range, intending to carry it for self-defense, but hadn’t shot it in a dynamic, move-and-shoot setting.

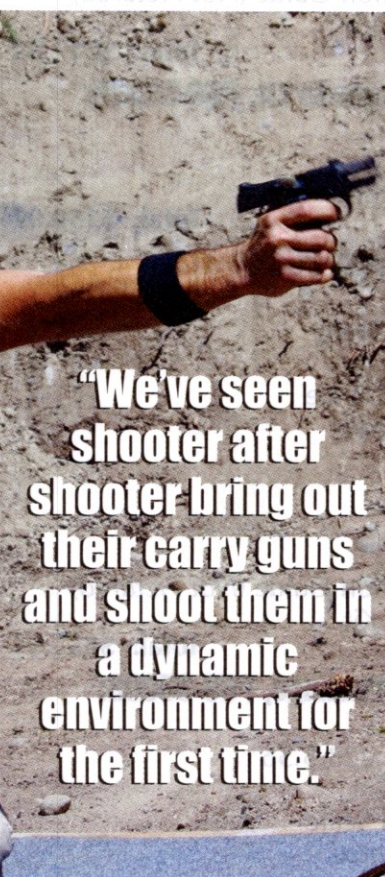
“Wow, that’s a lot more challenging than I thought,” said Castro after he finished his first stage. “I really have to concentrate....” Reloads were much more challenging than with his full-size SIG 320, and getting controlled accuracy at speed took effort. Suddenly, Castro was realizing all kinds of things about how to reload the 43 under stress, what his realistic range was, etc. Now, ASI’s “simple” short courses looked about right!

On the flip side, I’ve seen shooters appear at ASI events recently clothed head-to-toe in the garb and gear they use at semi-pro matches. Velcro racing belts, fancy holsters, customized jerseys with company logos, and all-steel match guns with scopes. For them ASI is “more trigger time” for their “real sport” somewhere else. They’re pretty good – and kinda missing the point.

Full disclosure, I work for ASI, so I get e-mails and phone calls about what happens at matches, and “the match gun thing” is a common thread. If someone needs a full-size gun and a scope to shoot a man-sized target at 8 yards consistently, great! Bring one! Having said that, for someone with competition-level shooting skills and good vision, shooting a scoped match gun in

ASI is like driving your monster truck to work. Revving your ego in the parking lot sends a message – about yourself.

I intentionally set aside my “monster truck” 3.5” semi-auto 12-gauge when I hunt pheasants with family. My great-grandfather’s Ithaca side-by-side feels totally different than my modern shotgun, yet it has features like barrel selection and cocking indicators that my modern gun doesn’t. It’s a design from another century, hand-crafted to excel in its own way. The Ithaca’s standard 16-gauge



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shells reduce my maximum ranges, and with only two shots, I’m more conservative with the shots I attempt. I think and hunt differently when I hunt with the Ithaca – and that’s part of the fun.

Like shooting the GLOCK 26.

Next time you’re at an ASI event, keep an eye on those older guys shooting their carry guns. One of them might be me, or ASI co-founder Sandy Wylie (shooting his Bersa BP9CC from an ankle holster). USPSA/IDPA master Sandy COULD shoot a full-size 1911, but he’s working on his “shorty” too. For people like him and Jordan Castro – people who can **really** shoot – there’s more going on in ASI than meets the eye.

