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Smith and Abeln Crowned 2021 Air Pistol Junior Olympic Champions

COLO SPRGS, CO (June 22, 2021) – Pistol Final's shoot-offs, an emotionally moving trophy dedication, and two new champions, Katelyn Abeln (Douglasville, Georgia) and Remington Smith (Ashburn, Georgia), are just a few highlights from Air Pistol National Junior Olympic Championships that took place June 16-20, 2021, at the USA Shooting Hotel Elegante Range in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Air Pistol Junior Olympics served as the qualification match for Junior World Championships in Lima, Peru in September 2021. The top three open juniors earned their spots on the team: Abeln, Suman Sanghera (Great Falls, Virginia), Annabell Yi (Diamond Bar, California), Smith, Ryan Yi (Diamond Bar, California), and Hunter Battig (Colorado Springs, Colorado) will all represent Team USA at Junior World Championships in Lima, Peru. Annabell Yi earned her team jacket on the podium and joined the others by being named to the USA Shooting Junior National Team and will remain on the team until at least June 20, 2022.

"This is the first time we've had a pistol specific event, so we got to really focus on our pistol juniors this week and even extended the schedule to allow them to shoot a little more and have some fun," said Breanne Orey, Manager of Competitions at USA Shooting. "We had juniors ages 10-20 years old competing for the Air Pistol Junior Olympic title and shooting alongside our Tokyo 2020 Olympians, it was just a really good pistol-focused couple of days."

The Men's and Women's finals featured a mix of well-seasoned competitors and young, fresh faces. Georgia native, Smith won overall men's gold and the Ohio State University rising junior, Abeln took home the gold for the overall women. Abeln shot a 1692 qualifying score (180 shots total, 60 shots per day), the highest qualifying score across both men's and women's competitors and Smith shot a 1687 for his three-day total. Both Abeln and Smith entered finals with such large leads that their Championship titles were secured even before the finals competition began.

In men's air pistol finals, it was Wesley Anderson (Colorado Springs, Colorado) who won the finals competition. This was only Anderson's second Junior Olympics, and the first JO finals he had ever competed in. After the first five series, he led the pack and continued his lead well into the elimination series where Smith took over and Ryan Yi (Diamond Bar, California) moved into the third-place spot. The leaderboard stayed consistent until the last elimination shots, where scores like a 10.7 from Yi moved him into the first-place position followed by another 10.7, this



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time from Anderson in the final elimination series. This last shot was enough to propel him into the first-place spot, winning the Men's Air Pistol Junior Olympic Finals. Immediately following his finals victory, Anderson and Battig had to enter in a three-shot shoot-off to determine the bronze overall Men's Junior Olympic medal winner and an official spot on the Junior World Championship Team. Ultimately it was Battig, the Olympic Men's Air Pistol Alternate, who was able to keep his cool and earn the bronze medal. Anderson finished with newfound finals confidence and he silver medal in the J2 category.

Olympic Women's Air Pistol Alternate Abeln secured first in the finals with an impressive multi-point lead over her competitors in the elimination series. It was Sanghera, Yi, Katherine Ahn (Diamond Bar, California) and Ada Korkhin (Brookline, Massachusetts) who battled it out for finishing places two through five. The women's final featured the youngest finals competitor, Mehr Chandra, a J3 junior and member of the Team Shooting Stars Pistol Club. The Women's final also featured three members of the Bridge Jr. Shooting Team, Yi, Ahn, and Jenny Noh (Diamond Bar, California). Another shoot-off took place after the women's finals between Ahn and Korkhin to determine 4th and 5th place overall per the selection procedures. Ahn shot a 9.9 on her first shot and Korkhin shot an 8.9. Both women shot the opposite scores on their second shot, heading into the third shot completely tied. It was Ahn who held steady and scored a 10.1 on her last shot which earned her the 4th overall spot.

The pinnacle of emotion this week was a touching trophy dedication ceremony in honor of Justin Ahn that took place on Sunday immediately following awards. The Korean Crown Trophy, won by Lones Wigger at the 1978 World Championships, and graciously donated by the Wigger family, was unveiled as the Justin Ahn Memorial Trophy, forever to be presented to the top overall junior at the National Junior Olympic Championships by combining scores in both air and sport pistol each year. Justin Ahn was a Junior National Team Member and Bridge Jr. Shooting Club athlete coached by In Kim who tragically passed in 2017 at the young age of 18. He was a bright star on the USA Shooting scene and a stronghold on podiums since 2013, including the 2015 Air Pistol Junior Champion. The trophy was unveiled in front of the crowd by Ahn's teammates, friends, and current members of the USA Shooting National Junior Team.

Tokyo 2020 Olympians Sandra Uptagrafft (Phenix City, Alabama), Alexis Lagan (Boulder City, Nevada), and James Hall (Columbia, Missouri) shot alongside juniors at this year's competition. These Olympians presented the medal winners with their awards following the competition and hosted a Q&A with National Pistol Coach, Jason Turner, where juniors and their parents could ask any questions related to the sport, training, and miscellaneous questions to tap into their expertise.

Women's Results:

Overall Champion: Katelyn Abeln (1700)

2nd place: Suman Sanghera (1688)

3rd place: Annabell Yi (1683)

J2 Champion: Ada Korkhin

J2 2nd place: Katherine Ahn

J2 3rd place: Emily Yoder

J3 Champion: Jenny Noh

J3 2nd place: Mehr Chanda

J3 3rd place: Karsen Kirkpatrick

Men's Results:

Overall Champion: Remington Smith (1693)

2nd place: Ryan Yi (1685)

3rd place: Hunter Battig (1678)

J2 Champion: Paul Kang

J2 2nd place: Wesley Anderson

J2 3rd place: Andrew Ahn

J3 Champion: Mark Shen

J3 2nd place: William Regala

J3 3rd place: Samuel Poulin

About USA Shooting

USA Shooting, a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation was chartered by the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee as the National Governing Body for the Olympic Shooting Sports in April 1995. The organization develops and implements programs to promote growth in the sport and serves as a sanctioning body for local and national competitions. Headquartered in Colorado Springs, Colorado, at the US Olympic and Paralympic Training Center, USA Shooting has a full-time staff dedicated to our sport.