

## Coaches Level Up at the Olympic Training Center

*Story by Roy Villasor*

*Photo by Dr. K. Lee*



Since USA Archery's adoption of the National Training System (NTS) in 2006, it has made America competitive again in both World and the Olympic Team events. This was clearly seen at the Silver Medal Match at the 2012 London Olympics when the US Team beat Korea.

But what exactly is NTS? Terms such as "*angular draw, barrel of the gun, and candy cane*" have been open to interpretation causing further confusion. For coaches who wish to separate rumor from fact, they have the unique option to learn NTS at the ChulaVista Olympic Training Center (CVOTC). At the end of the Level 4 Coach Course, coach candidates must be able to shoot and correctly teach NTS to their students because there is only one NTS. No hybrids or personal variations. Taking time off from their jobs and spending their own funds are seventeen (17) qualified, active and dedicated coaches from New York, Georgia, Michigan, Texas, Arizona and California who have arrived to level up and learn the intricate details of the KSL Shot Cycle, the foundation of NTS.

In welcoming the coach candidates to CVOTC, John Crawley, High Performance Director, introduced the concept of Sustained-

Competitive Excellence and how OTC provides coaches and athletes the environment to blossom, "climate control" as John calls it. He addressed the contribution of Level 4 NTS Coaches in the athletes pipeline leading to the OTC. His lecture on Gap Analysis as a working tool for coaches was truly informative and applicable to increase the performance of any archer. Director Crawley ended his talk with the results of the cross training of elite athletes with the elite Navy SEALs based in Coronado, California.

US National Head Coach Kisik Lee is personally conducting the course. He believes that the national level of coaching must continuously improve to produce the next generation of Elite archers. To become a powerhouse, both level of coaches and archers must level up. In this way, America will continuously produce teams of World Class archers.

Level 5 Coaches Steve Cornell (Ohio) Jim White (Georgia) and Junior Dream Team Coach Carl Greene (Georgia) among others will also make presentations and assist everyone in the practical exer-



***At the Chula Vista Olympic Training Center, in no particular order are: David Gunn, Roy Villasor, Mique Redding, John Francis, Carl Greene, Andrew Spangler, Dustin Burse, Randall Allen, Jim White, Douglas Jossi, Carmen Gunn, John Nyberg, Jennifer Harvey, Rodger Kuhl, Rita Schneller, Steve Cornell, Debbie Gibilaro, Chris Tackett, Josahan Jaime-Santacruz, Ignacio Palacio, Mike Cullumber and National Head Coach Kisik Lee***

cises as coach mentors. Together with Coach Lee, the coach candidates will live, eat and breathe archery. This has not been seen since the Millers established The World Archery Center (TWAC) decades ago.

For the next six days, the coach candidates will attend modules in NTS, Sports Psychology, Advanced Coaching and more modules non-stop from morning, noon and night, not to mention field exercises. Coach Randall Allen from Lansing, Michigan described the course by paraphrasing a military tier one unit where “the only easy day was yesterday”. They will receive so much knowledge, skills and techniques that they could easily qualify as the National Coach of another country.

NTS is different from the Korean System. It is based on the KSL Shot Cycle, which has been successfully employed by Korean, Australian and American archers competing internationally. It has begun to make inroads into Europe, with a successful seminar in Belgium with archers and coaches from all over the continent in attendance. It could very well become the first form without borders because it optimizes the human structure to brace the bow to consistently shoot better scores.

It should be emphasized that NTS is not only a description of the form but it is the standard adopted by USA Archery to be taught from the grassroots to the elite level from coast to coast. Having everyone on the same page allows a seamless transition in the development of talented archers from the local, state and regional level to reach the Olympic level without taking his/her form apart but instead build upon a rock solid foundation.

The coach candidates must grasp the concepts behind NTS. Coach Lee spoke of discarding techniques of the 17th Century for the science of the 21st Century. Thus, NTS is based on Bio-mechanics, Sports Science, Sports Medicine Vector Forces and Newtonian Physics. Weaved together, these concepts formed the KSL Shot Cycle which is made up of the following steps: Stance, Grip and Hook, Mind Set, Set-up, Load, Anchor, Transfer, Holding, Expansion, Release, Follow-Through, Reflection (Feedback).

At the core of the KSL Shot Cycle is the *barrel of the gun* formed by bone alignment combined with back tension. In a field exercise, coach candidates who properly executed the barrel of the gun, arrow alignment and stance were rewarded with a group centrally located on the target accomplished with neither a sight nor a clicker. When the KSL Shot Cycle is properly executed, there are no left and right arrows.

It was revealed that 99% of archers competing internationally are not properly using back tension. Prepping the scapulars through angular motion produces correct back tension. This results in the proper release and a real follow through that maintains the barrel of the gun throughout the shot. An additional benefit of angular motion is that it prevents injury as it avoids stressing the draw rotator cup.

During the Sports Psychology Module, the coach candidates were treated to the findings of Koo- Hyoung Lee, PhD., an alumni of Virginia Tech, based in San Jose, CA. The good doctor has collected data from the best archers of Korea and the United States. The EEG readings were taken thru the NeuroSky Wireless Brain Sensor worn by the archers as they executed their shot. It showed that Elite archers maintain high Attention and Meditation Levels. In its simplest, it's the archer that can maintain a singular focus and the ability to shut out distractions around him that wins. Dr. Lee advised that archers should have a singular thought as they go through the KSL Mental Cycle. There are several layers of the KSL Shot Cycle as the coach candidates learned throughout the Level 4 NTS Coach Course.

Because humans cannot maintain focus for long, Elite archers know when to apply that focus. During an actual demonstration on the field, he pointed out the effect of a single blink of the eye and the effect on the arrow. Dr. Lee also presented previous mental exercises that have improved resident athletes. He can tailor fit the mental program for the individual needs of each

archer. These exercises improve attentive and meditative skills that can be measured and graphically seen on your personal computer as one does the exercises or shoots with real time feedback.

Elite Coach Jim White in his southern accent that will immediately put you at ease, spoke about being a responsible and knowledgeable coach. His emphasis was on building a relationship with your archer. "Relationships determine results" that was the mantra for the advance coaching module. Jim reminded everyone again that goals have to be SMART, specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely. Jim also began training the eyes of the coach-candidates during practical exercises in the field. "Look at the CAUSE of the problem and not at the problem only". Coaches got to practice this by observing the resident athletes while at practice. He also introduced simple tools like long wooden dowels to high-tech iPads loaded with specific apps for coaches to use to train archers. As much as he was critical, he would roll out an Oreo. Reminding everyone what an Oreo was for.

Coach Lee shared his experiences in and out of the Coaches Box during international tournaments. While exciting to watch on Archery TV, it is quite stressful for both archer and coach. Executing the winning shot while their hearts are racing at 180bpm is extraordinary. Lee's candid and honest insight made the coach-candidates pause and think twice about being a national coach in the box after hearing the story of the death of a coach on the field in the course of intense competition.

In answering the question, "Where are We" today in the world of archery? Junior Dream Team Coach Steven Cornell took pride in answering that the United States is again competitive and raising a pool of young talented archers across the United States that meet and train periodically in JDT Camps at CVOTC. Coach Steve described the regimen JDT undergoes to improve their performance to qualify as Resident Athletes (RA). Of the 14 RAs, 9 came from the Junior Dream Team that trains exclusively in NTS.

He cited statistics and Olympic scores. For Senior Male Recurve, the USA Team Average per person has increased from 640 in the year 2000 to 671 in 2012. Whereas, for Senior Female Recurve, the Team Average per person has increased from 630 in the year 2000 to 660 in 2012.

Currently, there are 67 Americans who can shoot a 1300 FITA score. The application of NTS is not limited to just elite archers but has also brought success to the youth. Coach Steve cited the increase in scores at the Cadet level. Men's average scores rose from 1165 in 2008 to 1265 in 2012. Women's average scores rose from 1145 in 2008 to 1245 in 2012.

Added to the presenters, Coach Roy Villasor spoke of the NTS experience at the Easton Center in Van Nuys. He stated that NTS has reduced the time in bringing new archers up to the line to compete in the JOAD/California State Championship. The Center increased its medal haul from 5 in 2012 to 11 medals in 2013. Considering the number of arrows shot on a weekly basis, the young veterans continue to shoot without injury. The Center has already qualified one member, Amanda Tamayo for JDT.

Coach Roy also shared his observations about employment opportunities for coaches abroad. In the 70's when the US was on top, there was a demand for American Coaches. As Korea began to dominate the sport in the mid 80's and 90's, the demand shifted in favor of Korean Coaches. Half of the Olympic Coaches at the 2012 London Games were Korean.

A demand for American Coaches has started again since the USAT beat Korea for the Silver Medal in London. One country from the Caribbean and another from the Middle East have started recruiting. And opportunities are not limited abroad, National Head Coach Tsering of Bhutan, was recently in California to learn NTS from Olympic Coach Don Rabska and Level 4 Coach Rene Paquia. Although a country of 2.5 Million, Bhutan is unique that it only sends a single team to the Olympics, its Archery team. This demand for American coaches will increase as Team USA maintains its winning momentum.

Attending the course was Dustin Burse from Buffalo, New York. The Level 4 Coach Course was a reaffirmation of his belief that archery is a martial art. "The philosophical side of archery is often overlooked" he said. Coach Burse appreciated learning that NTS was not only biomechanics but also had a philosophical aspect emphasized by Coach Lee. He would definitely recommend other coaches to level up and take this course at CVOTC.

In the last century, Bruce Lee introduced a new fighting form, Jeet Kune Do. It was heavily scrutinized and even criticized. However, it remains with us today. In this century, we have NTS complete with its skeptics. However, we cannot simply dismiss its track record as well as its potential for the future. Thus, USA Archery maintains the National Training System.

Coach Lee expressed his confidence that with more coaches coming to CVOTC who truly want to learn NTS, it will spread to the grassroots and the US will have a steady stream of archers capable of shooting scores to compete and win a place on the world podium. At the open forum, the coach-candidates asked Coach Lee, when does he begin training the team for the 2016 Olympic Games in Brazil? Coach Kisik Lee smiled and answered: the day after the 2012 London Games ended. "It's a continuing process, day by day without let up".

