

New trap shooting club is set for Spring

Feb 28, 2017

By Joseph Abraham - sports editor



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO Sullivan County Conservation Club Secretary and Youth Coordinator Jay Mendels is the head coach of the new Monticello High School Trap Team. Mendels (sitting on the desk) talks with parents and students who were interested in joining the team at a meeting on Wednesday.

MONTICELLO - A new trap shooting club, Monticello High School Trap Team, spearheaded by the Sullivan County Conservation Club, was approved at a Monticello School Board meeting on February 16.

Jay Mendels serves as the secretary and youth coordinator at the Sullivan County Conservation Club. He is a certified firearm instructor, and volunteers a lot of his time teaching youth firearm safety and marksmanship. Mendels will serve as the Monticello HS Trap Team Head Coach.

"One of the most popular activities we do there with the kids involves trap shooting," Mendels said. "When I found out there was a USA High School Clay Target League that started a chapter in New York just last year, I began researching the program." The league's focus is on safety above all else. Since the league started nationally in 2001, there have been over 30,000 participants, over 330,000 matches, and over 20 million shots fired - all without any reported injuries! In addition to keeping things safe, secondary goals are to keep things fun and to help improve marksmanship.

"One of the major draws to the sport is that it is equal-opportunity in every way you can imagine," Mendels said. "Unlike some sports where only the biggest and best get to participate during matches, everyone on the trap team can join in - and they do. It doesn't matter if you are boy, girl, large, small, handicapped, or not, everyone gets to participate and contribute to the team." The team members are Monticello students grades six-12.

"The initial positive feedback and interest has been overwhelming," Mendels explained. "The cost to the participants is affordable, and we are in the process of lining up sponsors such as the Conservation Club and the Sullivan County Friends of the NRA to help offset the cost of targets, ammunition and supplies that the kids will need.

"The team competes by submitting scores online to be matched against similar size school teams all across the state. The statewide league (as a part of the nationwide league) provides all the assistance needed to organize the team, but we couldn't be here at all doing this without the support of our volunteer coaches from the Conservation Club, and the guidance and foresight of the Monticello School Board and Superintendent Tammy Mangus."

The club has drawn so much interest from students and their parents that they have already filled the roster for the Spring 2017 season.

"Here at Monticello we are all about making kids life ready," Monticello Superintendent Tammy Mangus said. "That's not just one path. It means thinking outside the box to create opportunities to grow every student's learning and peak their interests. We are excited to have this new club."

"I think this club is going to open the door for many other area schools to develop similar programs," Mendels said.

What is trap shooting?

Trap shooting is a sport where you have to try to shoot a moving orange clay disk that travels at a different angle each time it is released. The shooter stands on one of five positions that form an arc behind the trap house (from which the clay disks are thrown by a mechanical arm). The ammunition is made up of tiny pellets that travel in a tight cloud when fired. The object is to have the cloud of pellets and the clay target intersect in midair. When well hit, the clay disk disintegrates in a cloud of orange dust.