



2005 Inductee

## David Hughes

In 1963 a 15-year-old young man named David Hughes joined the TFAA. He had just taken his first deer with a bow the previous hunting season and wanted to be able practice year round. That same year he helped start the Irving Bowhunters Association, commonly referred to as IBA. David never held an office with IBA, but helped cut in the original range out by DFW airport and also the current range where it has been since 1968. David didn't know then that he was about to embark on a lifetime in archery, where he would come to be known as one of the best in its history.

After a few years of competition, David won his first State Tournament as a Young Adult, in 1965. David shot Barebow, which at the time, was 1 of only 3 styles you could shoot. By 1966 David had moved into the Adult Division where the top shooters of the day were CD Huggins and Rick Gilley. David placed 3rd in 1966 and in 1967 fell just short behind Gilley, taking 2nd. That was ok though, David went on to win the next 7 State Tournaments in a row.

Also in 1967, David made the trip to Jackson, Mississippi, to compete in his first NFAA National Tournament. In just 2 years he'd gone from shooting 390s as a Young Adult to shooting over 500 in Adult A Class. After that 5-day tournament, David finished in 2nd place behind another Barebow legend Frank Gandy. Here again a second place finish ignited this competitive spirit that was going to lead David back to win several more nationals in the future.

From 1968 to 1971 David won 4 straight National Championships. From Salinas, California, Watkins Glen, New York, Aurora, Illinois and Cedar City, Utah, David Hughes was Mr. Barebow. His greatest accomplishment in those 4 years was winning the 1969 Nationals in Watkins Glen, New York. Total attendance for this tournament was 470 shooters where David not only won the Barebow title, he beat everyone there except for 2 pros. David was at the top of his game and it looked like he was unbeatable.

Nationals were held in Ludlow, Massachusetts, in 1972. That year David found himself fighting for the title with a guy who had been studying David for 3 years. Denny Cline won that year by 2 points and though David didn't get his 5th straight title, his first words to Denny were "Congratulations champ!" That night after the tournament was over, at a party to celebrate the winner, David started a tradition that is still carried on today. David handed Denny his quiver belt with his Texas buckle and the inscription on the back "NFAA Champ". If you get a chance to attend a National, look for yourself, the Barebow belt is still passed on to each winner, some 30 years later.

David went to Nationals in Aurora, Illinois in 1973 with the intent of getting his belt back. However, once again, Denny Cline fought David off in the 5-day competition to hold on to the belt for one more year. To this day Denny Cline is the only person to have beaten David twice at a National Tournament. Though fierce competitors, Denny and David were good friends. During that week Denny had invited David and others to a picnic, which many in the Barebow community point to as the start of the Barebow Fraternity. This group is still active today promoting the concept of shooting without a sight. They still have a picnic every year at Outdoor Nationals and welcome everyone to attend.

By 1974, the compound bow had been legalized for NFAA competition, Freestyle Limited had been created to separate finger shooters from release shooters, and David Hughes hadn't won a National Tournament in 2 years. David had tried the compound with little success until he spent a day with a good friend Bobby Hunt. Bobby worked with David to get an Olympus compound tuned up the way David liked. He also worked with David to show him how to take a compound apart and put it back together again. David wasn't too familiar with the compounds and welcomed Bobby's help. Whatever they did, worked well for David, as he went on to win his 5th National title that summer in Golden, Colorado. David set all new Barebow records and once again beat every finger shooter at the tournament.

In the spring of 1975, David received a phone call from another Barebow shooter requesting some coaching and advice. Al Tuller had been shooting for a couple of years but wanted to get some expert advice from the champ. David agreed and had Al fly down to spend the weekend at IBA for sort of a personalized shooting clinic. David spent the entire weekend with Al tuning his bow and coaching. That summer, at Nationals in Jay, Vermont, Al defeated his mentor by a close 17 points after 5 days of shooting. Al later wrote an article that was published in Archery magazine, personally thanking David for all his help.

The San Diego Open, in 1976, was the first big money shoot, which offered \$10,000 for 1st place. David put a sight on his bow and grabbed a release and went to San Diego. All of the top shooters from around the country were in attendance shooting for the big prize money. Everyone, except Lloyd Napier, was surprised when David went up to collect the championship check. That same year target changes were on the NFAA agenda and this was going to be the last National Tournament on the old 5-3 scoring system. David was primed to leave his mark at this tournament knowing the records would be locked down forever. Tuller and Cline were both going to be there and David knew the competition was going to be stiff. David pulled off some miraculous shooting, smashing the records with an aggregate score of 2744 out of a perfect 2800.

After 1976, David went on to win 4 more Outdoor Nationals until he retired in 1981. David made a couple of comebacks at the request of close friends such as Charlie Langston and Buddy Gale. In 1993, David added one more title to his list by winning Indoor Nationals. David at one time or another has held every Barebow record in the TFAA and NFAA, except the national animal round. He has attended a total of 18 National Tournaments and never finished lower than 2nd place, except the one year he shot Freestyle. You would be hard pressed to find any individual in Texas, maybe even the World, who has a shooting resume as impressive as David Hughes.

**David's Titles to Date:**

11 National Championships  
11 State Championships  
10 Sectional Championships  
3 Las Vegas Championships  
The San Diego World Open

**David has been a staff shooter for the following:**

Wing Archery, Pearson, Groves, Carrol Archery, Olympus, Rocky Mountain, Bear Archery, Jennings, Viking Archery, Native American Archery.

**Most memorable archers:**

In Texas: Rick Gilley, C.D. Huggins, Bobby Hunt, Eddie McCrary, Richard Womack, Ricky Hunt, Tim Holt, Jimmie G. Byrnes, Ron Tuttle, D.B. Wisenhunt, John Nowell, Charlie Langston, Buddy Gale, Monte Bowen

Outside of Texas: Denny Cline, Al Tuller, Dave Clem, Bruce Shelly, Don Ball, Rick Evans, Lloyd Napier

(David was nominated to the Hall of Fame by Bill Bowen.)