Records fell like dominos at the 2020 World Speed Shooting Championships held at the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) Talladega Marksmanship Park in Talladega, Alabama starting on Wednesday September 23rd and concluding on Sunday September 27th. Steel Challenge reinforced its reputation as the “drag-racing” discipline of the action shooting sports, with all 13 divisions represented across all eight stages of fire. With a grand total of 104 possible division and stage world records, 38 became new benchmarks of the fastest of the fast. That’s over one-third of all division and stage times! Some familiar names came out on top, and there were first time World Champions crowned!

Before we get to the results of the match, if you have never attended an event at the CMP Talladega Marksmanship Park, you need to look at the calendar and find an event in your discipline to attend. This is a state of the art shooting facility with a breathtaking clubhouse. The team at the facility is part of the shooting family, so they tailor their customer service to the competitors. Be prepared to shoot your event, but this is a shooting destination, so do some research and bring some other guns to take advantage of what the facility has to offer. Mike Foley and Jake Martens shared at the match that the World Speed Shooting Championships will be held at the same location for the next three
years, with the next match being held April 14th through April 18th.

The team at the CMP aided in setting up the MGM targets with the help of the USPSA leadership team, laser-leveling every single target to the exact height and dimensions. After all, if world records are going to be recorded, the stages have to be exactly the same and perfect for the competitors. The shooting conditions for the match were ideal, with most days being partly cloudy with temperatures in the high 70s and low 80s – a stark contrast to the match held two weeks prior. A welcomed enhancement of the match was a newly created “Vendor City”, which was located in the middle of the stages. Every competitor was afforded the opportunity to stop by one of the vendors who donated to the match. It was a great break from the match to shoot a fully automatic .22LR.

In the modern Steel Challenge era with eight stages and 13 divisions, there is one inconceivable goal many have chased after for years, and that is breaking 60 seconds in a match. The 2019 World Speed Shooting Championships was an indication the competitiveness in the sport was enabling this once unimaginable goal to be realized, with Kolby Pavlock scoring a 60.61 in Rimfire Pistol Open. In previous years, KC Eusebio and Max Michel logged similar times, getting close to breaking the barrier to get into the 50’s. There were promises this time would fall with three competitors logging sub-60-second times earlier in the 2020 shooting season, but could it actually be done on the biggest stage for Steel Challenge? The answer was absolutely! Five competitors shot six times under 60 seconds; the list of competitors, respective division, and times are:

- **Chris Barrett**  
  Rimfire Rifle Open – 56.57
- **Grant Kunkel**  
  Rimfire Rifle Open – 57.52
- **Nate Gibson**  
  Rimfire Rifle Open – 58.17
- **KC Eusebio**  
  Rimfire Pistol Open – 58.43
- **Cole Busch**  
  Rimfire Rifle Iron – 58.86
- **Chris Barrett**  
  Pistol Caliber Carbine Iron – 59.48
At the 2016 World Shoot Speed Shooting Championships, there was only one person who shot in the 60’s; this was the legendary pistol shooter Max Michel. All other times were 70.x and over. At the 2020 World Speed Shooting Championships the top 46 times were in the 60’s. As the popularity of the sport has increased, so has the desire for the competitors to be named the fastest in the country in their respective divisions.

In 2020 we saw the first times shot in the 50’s, with Chris Barrett’s time of 56.57 being the fastest time ever shot in any Steel Challenge match, let alone the World Speed Shooting Championships. How much faster will this sport get in the next 12 months? Is a 54 possible? Will we see times in the 40’s at some point? As long as the competition grows, there will be those of us who will continue to put in the time to be the fastest.

The five days of shooting concluded with 630 guns shooting for score. Prior to the awards ceremony and prize table, there was a buffet-style meal served inside the facility with abundant seating outside as the sun set on the match. The appropriately timed awards ceremony was facilitated by Mike Foley with Troy McManus congratulating everyone on their achievements. Competitors then had their pictures taken to memorialize their achievements. Shortly after, a well-run prize table process was facilitated by Jeff Jones.

The real story from the match is the dominance from the younger generation of shooters who have cemented their names in the history books as World Champions. Twenty of the top 22 placements are 21 years of age or younger. Chris Barrett won an impressive 4 world titles. Emily Cunningham won multi-Ladies Titles. Cole Busch took top honors in Rimfire Rifle Iron. Ethan Inocando won the prestigious title of Steel Master. Neal Norman is now a World Champion in Rimfire Pistol Iron. How cool must it be to tell your friends at school you are a World Champion?

If you are looking for a family-friendly action shooting sport to try, grab your gear and head to your local Steel Challenge match. Who knows, maybe you will find a passion for the game and you, too, will become a World Champion!