

# Dave Butz Shares His Love Of the Shooting Sports With A New Generation Of Fans

By Karen Mehall, Senior Editor, *American Hunter*

Standing 6 feet, 6 inches tall, NRA Board and Life member Dave Butz—the retired All-Pro defensive tackle who won two NFL Super Bowl rings with the Washington Redskins—knows how

to pull his weight. Today he does it on behalf of America's youth, donning his NRA shooting vest at charity and youth shooting events nationwide in the name of teaching kids how to shoot.

## What influenced your decision to serve on the NRA Board?

I'd been attending Charlton Heston celebrity shoots and was enjoying the people I'd met, including NRA's Wayne LaPierre, and thought, *this is a great organization to belong to*. I think people saw I liked discussing shooting sports and the NRA and that because I was a so-called celebrity, I could make a difference. When we discussed my running for the board, I was deeply honored.

## What is your goal as chairman of the NRA Youth Programs Committee?

We want to help young people enjoy the shooting sports in a safe manner and get more of them involved. We're reaching about 2 million kids a year with our programs, whether through the Royal Rangers, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts—and there are many small-scale opportunities, too—people using their own ranges to host fun shooting activities.

## How did you get started shooting?

I started with a BB gun. When I was about 12, I beat my dad [in a shooting match] and Mom piped up, "Verlo, it's time you get that boy a .22." I thought I'd hit manhood right there. In 1990, I got a Remington 1100, started shooting sporting clays and have been at it ever since. I also enjoy shooting to 500 yards with open sights. I don't just shoot—I like to *place* a round. After playing pro ball for 16 years I missed competing. It's not the number of targets you miss; it's the number you hit.

## What charities have you supported through the shooting sports?

I support organizations including the Royal Rangers, the Boy Scouts of America, Shriners Hospitals for Children and breast cancer groups. One year I took 32 trips—and put 3,200 miles on my truck just to and from the airport. I'm on call 24/7, so when the phone rings, I leave.



Dave Butz (center) meets with some young fans at the 2012 NRA Annual Meetings in St. Louis, Mo.

## Why are you so passionate about teaching kids how to shoot?

I want kids to have as much or more fun than I had, whether with a shotgun, a .50-caliber rifle, an air rifle or black powder. I want them to be safe and have a ball every time they pull the trigger. I get excited watching them get excited over breaking targets.

## What inspired you to become an NRA-certified shotgun instructor?

NRA certification makes you well-rounded, which is important. Someone recently said, "Dave, after you explained that station I broke 16 targets." If you can explain how you're presented with two targets and why you take this one first, they get it. I used to shoot large quantities of ammo; now I help others to experience the rewards.

## How has your celebrity status helped you to get more kids involved in shooting sports?

It makes people interested in what I have to say. My college minor was in speech, which was handy years ago when I did a Wheaties commercial with Walter Payton. Now speaking is an asset in teaching kids.

## Is there a particular role you assume to help charity events generate additional funds?

I invite organizations to have people bid on taking shooting lessons from me at their events.

## How do the shooting sports teach kids valuable character-building lessons?

Shooting sports teach respect and a little respect on the range goes a long way—please and thank you, yes, ma'am, excuse me. They also teach safety, responsibility and self-discipline.

## What message do you want to give to America's youth and to people in general?

The Second Amendment protects the First Amendment. With 80 million U.S. gun owners, it's good for people to be exposed to firearms. You don't have to own a gun, but if you need to use one, know how to use it safely. The NRA is the one organization protecting the Second Amendment. Without NRA, there would be no guns, no shooting sports, no hunting—no liberty. The more kids we expose, the more we will perpetuate that freedom—hopefully forever. *ah*