



PHOTOS BY WILSON A. RIVERA

Troopers from the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Special Troops Battalion, explode off the starting box and set out for their con-

cealment positions before the other team gets a fix of where they are. This is part of the 2006 Fort Bliss Intramural Paintball Championship Saturday.

## USASMA out-paints post paintball competition

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Paintballs, fired by Soldiers from various units on post, zipped through the air signaling the beginning of the 2006 Fort Bliss Intramural Paintball Championship Saturday at Biggs Park.

The U.S. Sergeants Major Academy team won the overall tournament, even after a loss toward the beginning of the final championship games. USASMA dominated the entire competition, leaving other teams painted without even losing a teammate at times.

"The tough competition could be recognized by what type of equipment they brought and how they were dressed to compete. It represents how much knowledge they have toward the sport," said Sgt. Maj. Casey A. Carson, USASMA Class 56.

The double elimination tournament gave hope to 22 teams; even if they lost their first game, they could still

make it to the championship game. Teams were awarded points toward their brigades Commander Cup standing, but the bulk of the points came from the final placing teams.

A sound of the whistle started the action and firing across the field. Six players on each team sprung off the starting boxes at opposite ends of a football-length field. They ran to covered positions while firing paintballs downfield.

Sgt. Thomas Bower, 72nd Military Police Detachment, was one of the last players left on his team, taking fire from about five German Soldiers from the German Air Force Air Defense Center. They flanked Bower and popped him to win the match.

"I didn't know where their team's positions were," said Bower.

Safety in paintball is emphasized when players are entering and exiting the field. Before entering the field, players ensured their masks were on tightly, and when exiting, they



Spc. Dave Powers, 11th Bde., shoots the last players from an opposing team to advance in the paintball championships.

checked to see if the barrel of the paintball gun had its safety plug in.

"I got hit, but after five to six seconds you don't feel it, said Spc. Moses Marmolejo, who was hit on the neck, leaving a laceration from the paintball.

During the first round championship game, USASMA versus the Troopers from the 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, USASMA lost their first game. The sergeants major on the team kept their concealments and constantly fired at areas the teams had exposed, like their feet and tops of their heads.

The overall competition went well except for a shortage of referees, according to Carson. Volunteers from the teams offer to assist as referees and kept the matches moving along.

Team placings were USASMA in 1st place, 1st Sqdn, 9th Cav. in 2nd and 108th Air Defense Artillery Bde. in third.



Bleeding from his neck where a paintball hit him, Spc. Moses Marmolejo, 11th Bde., claims doesn't feel a thing.



Sgt. Maj. Ben Jones, USASMA, crawls toward a better vantage-point while his battle buddy, Sgt. Maj. Peter Ladd, lays down suppressive paintball fire.