

Inter Staters Triumph

Report On The 2009 NSW Match Rifle & Long Range F Class Championships

A 20mm burst of rain in the week preceding the NSW Match Rifle and Long Range F Class Championships left the Ungarie range with a tinge of green to contrast with the red earth and served to settle the dust as a record number of competitors descending on the small community on May 2 & 3 for the annual NSW Championships.

With perfect autumn weather for the whole weekend the shoot was conducted in a great atmosphere. Saturday started still and warm with possibilities abounding and high centre counts but Ungarie wasn't going to let competitors have their own way. Particularly as on offer was the famed NSW 'Bird' trophy (for most number of 'birds' shot for the weekend). Things got trickier after the first range and 1100 and 1200 ranges saw most competitors actively vying for this trophy with a total of 81 birds for these two ranges on Day 1.

Match Rifle

With most of the recently announced Australian Match Rifle Team members in attendance the competition all weekend was close. Rob Halloran and Jenni Hausler started the event with 75.10 at the first range with Rob pipping Jenni on the countback, In Reserve Grade, Jeff Allen took the range with 73.6, only 1 centre from last year's winner John Collis.

At 1100 with a borrowed rifle and borrowed ammunition, the newcomer to Match Rifle shooting, Barry White, took honours in both Open and Reserve grade and was wondering what was so hard about Match Rifle shooting – he found out at 1200 yards!. The 20 shot 1200 yard range was held in patchy conditions, with one competitor remarking that he thought he was in the Army with everything going LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT. John Kielly with an excellent 95.4 in the conditions took the range but overall it was Rob Halloran with a 95.3 who took the Day 1 Aggregate with 239.18, 1 point ahead of John Kielly on 238.13.

In Reserve Grade honours were spread around with Ross Atherton putting in an 89.3 at the 1200 yards to lead at the end of the first day on 232.17, 1 point ahead of "*I've given up drinking*" Barry White.

Competitors waddled to the mound after the traditional 'all you can eat' breakfast on Sunday morning at the Ungarie Bowling Club – most looking for a patch of sun in which to snooze off the eggs, sausages, pancakes, bacon, hash browns..... A double helping fired up Rob Halloran to again take the 1000 yards with another 75.10 from John Kielly and Jenni Hausler both with 75.9. Jim Clifford took Reserve Grade with 75.7, one point ahead of Jeff Allen. Milder conditions at 1100 from the previous day saw much improved scores with Philip Bain taking the range with 74.8 on a 4 way countback from Gil Walker, John Kielly and Alan Blain. But all the focus was on the Grand Agg as after 5 ranges there were only 3 centres separating Rob Halloran on 387.33 from John Kielly on 387.30.

Not to be outdone, the Reserve Grade Grand Agg was all tied up with Ross Atherton and Jeff Allen both heading back to the last range on 371.24.

As usual fortunes are won and lost at 1200. Philip Bain took the range with 72.6, enough to move him up into second place in the Grand Agg, but John Kielly (QLD)

with a 71.3 took the Grand Agg with total of 458.33, 3 points ahead of Philip Bain on 455.42 and Rob Halloran on 455.37.

In Reserve Grade, Ross Atherton (QLD) with a 71.3 at the final range emerged first in the Grand Agg on 442.27 from John Collis on 438.20.

F Class Open

Numbers for the F Class Open event grow each year and standards were high. Bruce Kneebone (VIC) has an obvious liking for the Ungarie range following on from his resounding success there at the Nationals in 2008, Bruce took out 4 of the 6 ranges, both Daily Aggregates and the Grand Aggregate. His score of 525 for the weekend was 20 points ahead of Ken Melgaard in second place. Third was Paul Deehan on 501.

The most memorable moment of the weekend had to be Bruce's perfect score at 1000 yards on Day 2. Fifteen straight Centre bulls! Not to be outdone Ken Melgaard took to the mound and would have emulated the feat – if only the gremlins hadn't stepped in at Shot 5. Fourteen Centre bulls + a red spotter (somewhat closer to the edge of the target than the centre).

However Bruce didn't have it all his own way. He tied on 177 with Paul Deehan for the 1200 yard aggregate. This caused much excitement for the Range Officers who got to conduct the first Tie Shoot ever in the history of these championships– with Bruce again emerging the winner

And for the records – The Bird Trophy was claimed by Cliff Austen (shooting a 223)

Warm welcome also to Stuart Collings and his wife Nicki, recently arrived from the UK who took the time to drive down on Sunday to check out the competition.

A great weekend was had by all - thanks largely to the efforts of the local Ungarie Rifle Club and the Ungarie community who put on a welcome second to none every year. Thanks also to the major Sponsors of this event, **RayTrade** and **Thales Australia**. Their continued sponsorship of this event over a number of years is greatly appreciated.

Winners 2009 NSW Match Rifle & Long Range F Class (Open)State Championships

Day 1			Day 2		
1000 Yards			1000 Yards		
F Class	C. Burdett	88	F Class	B. Kneebone	90
Match Reserve	J. Allen	73.6	Match Reserve	J. Clifford	75.7
Match Open	R. Halloran	75.10	Match Open	R. Halloran	75.10
1100 Yards			1100 Yards		
F Class	B. Kneebone	84	F Class	B. Kneebone	88
Match Reserve	B. White	73.5	Match Reserve	J. Allen	72.5
Match Open	B. White	73.5	Match Open	P. Bain	74.8
1200 Yards			1200 Yards		
F Class	B. Kneebone	104	F Class	K. Melgaard	76
Match Reserve	R. Atherton	89.3	Match Reserve	R. Atherton	71.3
Match Open	J. Kielly	95.4	Match Open	P. Bain	72.6
Day 1 Aggregate <i>Sponsored by RayTrade</i>			Day 2 Aggregate <i>Sponsored by RayTrade</i>		
F Class	B. Kneebone	274	F Class	B. Kneebone	251

Match Reserve	R. Atherton	232.17	Match Reserve	J. Collis	210.11
Match Open	R. Halloran	239.18	Match Open	G. Walker	221.20
1200 Yard Aggregate – <i>Sponsored By Thales Australia</i>					
F Class	B. Kneebone (Tie Shoot from P. Deehan)				177
Match Reserve	R. Atherton				160.6
Match Open	J. Kielly				166.7
Grand Aggregate –F Class (Open) – <i>Sponsored By Thales Australia</i>					
1 st	Bruce Kneebone				525
2 nd	Ken Melgaard				505
3 rd	Paul Deehan				501
Grand Aggregate Match Rifle Reserve – <i>Sponsored Thales Australia</i>					
1 st	Ross Atherton				442.27
2 nd	John Collis				428.20
Grand Aggregate – Match Rifle Open – <i>Sponsored By Ray Trade</i>					
1 st	John Kielly				458.33
2 nd	Philip Bain				455.42
3 rd	Rob Halloran				455.37