

Record Match Rifle Championships

Records aplenty were set at the Australian Match Rifle and Long Range F Class (Open) Championships held at Ungarie (NSW) in August. There were a record number of entries for a National MR Championship not including visiting international teams and record scores were shot in both the individual and teams competitions.

Competitors came from Queensland, South Australia, Victoria, NSW and ACT and Ungarie put on a huge welcome for all. The range was in top shape after some recent rain and the weather held up to everything that you expect from the Ungarie range. Wednesday and Thursday were fine and mild before a wet and windy change came through early Friday morning. Fortunately the rain abated early meaning only a short delay to the morning's start. Unfortunately the wind chose to stay around - blowing at a steady 25 km/hour and straight off the Antarctic!

At the end of Day 1, Philip Bain (NSW) was leading Match Rifle Open on 220.29 – only 7 centres ahead of Adrian Abbott (NSW). John Collis (TAS) was leading Reserve grade which was proving to be a tight competition with range honours being well shared around. Bruce Kneebone (VIC) in F Class had made a clean sweep of the day winning all ranges and the Daily Aggregate.

Day 2 started back at 1200 yards and Lew Horwood (VIC) showed the form that was to take him through the remainder of the competition. Shooting 224 for the day, only 1 point down, it equaled the highest match rifle daily aggregate score shot in Australia. Competition was fierce at the final range at 1000 yards to see who could shoot the most centres. Alan Blain (VIC) with a 75.13 took top spot closely followed by Bill MacFarlane (ACT) with 75.12. Range honours in Reserve Grade were shared around again with Greg Phelan (VIC), Gerald Upchurch (TAS), and Norm Linehan (VIC) all winning ranges and Gerald Upchurch coming out of Day 2 in front. The excitement in F Class (Open) was around someone other than Bruce Kneebone winning some ranges with Noel Osborn (VIC) taking both the 1200 and 1100 yards. Bruce however still ended the day with a comfortable 11 point lead overall.

Day 3 and the only the hardy (and mad) ventured out of their cars for any length of time. A quick clothing check awarded the prize for the most layers of clothes to Ray Rudduck with 6 layers (excluding shooting jacket!). Whilst the wind proved icy and fierce it was fairly consistent and once you picked the right windage, holding in the bull proved not too difficult as Willie Schaffner (SA) proved at 1000 shooting 75.10 and Kerod Lindley (QLD) at 1100 shooting 75.5. Rob Halloran (NSW) only dropped one shot at 1200 to shoot 74.4. Lew Horwood, however, was shooting consistently throughout and only dropped 2 points for the day to lead Open grade by 10 points going into the final day. Reserve Grade again shared the honours around between Gerald Upchurch, Ross Atherton (QLD) and Frank Pinyon (SA) with Frank taking the Day 3 aggregate by 4 points. Bruce Kneebone took the first 2 ranges for the day in F Class (Open) with Paul Deehan (VIC) getting his act together at the final range to take a 1 point victory. Overall though Bruce Kneebone spent Day 3 extending his considerable lead in F Class (Open).

Day 4 saw the finish of the individual competition with a 20 shot match at 1200. Shane Courtney's 98.9 (VIC) top scored for Match Rifle but Lew Horwood shooting a 96.4 extended his overall lead in the Grand Aggregate (761.67) to take the Championship by 11 points from Philip Bain (750.76) and Kerod Lindley (748.56).

It was all down to the last range for Reserve Grade with Frank Pinyon top scoring and taking his Grand Aggregate score to 722.50 giving him a 2 point win over John Collis (TAS) on 720.44. Bruce Kneebone ended the shoot with a 6 point win on the last range to take his overall score in the Grand Aggregate to 854 – 34 points ahead of Noel Osborn.

Next up the teams matches which commenced with the new Maloney Trophy – a 16 shot State Teams match with no sightseers shot at 1100 yards. No sightseers proved telling with points lost on those first two shots proving crucial. Victoria took the honours with a score of 303.17 from NSW on 297.18 – 1 point ahead of South Australia on 296.20. Queensland finished with 294.16 and the Combined **ACT Tasmania** team (affectionately known as the 'CACTAS') on 286.12.

The four person Freebairn Teams match which followed at 1200 yards saw a fairly even competition with Team Bain comprising Philip Bain (Captain/Coach), Ray Rudduck, Emile Daniel and John Oddy on 278.10 having a 5 point win over Team Halloran.

The final day, Sunday, was the three range match between the State Teams competing for the Rowlands Trophy. Scores were tight after the first two ranges with NSW having a 1 point lead over Victoria going into the final 1200 yard range. As usual 1200 yards proved the telling range with NSW emerging victors with a record high score of 881.81 from Victoria on 873.71. Queensland on 857.69 was third, one point ahead of South Australia on 856.56 and CACTAS on 834.61. The previous highest score in the Rowlands Match of 847 set by Queensland in 2007 was broken by four out of the five teams which reflected both the good shooting conditions and the improvements being achieved in the standard of Match Rifle shooting generally in Australia.

Proceedings ended with a carefully scripted whirly wind making its way through the back of the mound and saving Jenny any excess baggage for her flight home by taking her jacket back to Queensland for her!

As in previous events the Ungarie community proved how hospitable small rural communities can be by providing a welcome that will long be remembered by those that traveled from far and wide. Markers for the event were all from the Ungarie community and donated their payments to local community projects. The Ungarie CANASSIST group provided all the catering on the range and the Central Hotel and Ungarie Bowling Club provided nightly functions for the competitors. Thanks also to the Ungarie Rifle Club for their work in preparing the range, Chris Roberts Butts Officer, John Oddy, Range Officer and 'his deputies' and official photographer Bill MacFarlane.

Special thanks to the Sponsors: Herron Security & Sport, Ray Trade, Triple J Imports, Grenfell Armoring Services, Tales Australia and Llarnoo Bull Power who provided a wide range of high quality prizes worth over \$3,000 for the event.

Results and photos of the event are available on the Match Rifle website at www.matchrifle.org

The Winners

| <i>Event</i> | <i>Sponsor</i> | <i>Match Rifle Open</i> | <i>MR Reserve</i> | <i>F Class (Open)</i> |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Day 1 1000 | | Philip Bain | Frank Pinyon | Bruce Kneebone |
| Day 1 1100 | | Adrian Abbott | Peter Rix | Bruce Kneebone |
| Day 1 1200 | | Philip Bain | John Collis | Bruce Kneebone |
| Day 1 Aggregate | Ray Trade | Philip Bain | John Collis | Bruce Kneebone |
| Day 2 1200 | | Willie Schaffner | Greg Phelan | Noel Osborn |
| Day 2 1100 | | Rob Halloran | Gerald Upchurch | Noel Osborn |
| Day 2 1000 | | Alan Blain | Norm Linehan | Bruce Kneebone |
| Day 2 Aggregate | Thales Australia | Lew Horwood | Gerald Upchurch | Bruce Kneebone |
| Day 3 1000 | | Willie Schaffner | Gerald Upchurch | Bruce Kneebone |
| Day 3 1100 | | Kerod Lindley | Ross Atherton | Bruce Kneebone |
| Day 3 1200 | | Rob Halloran | Frank Pinyon | Paul Deehan |
| Day 3 Aggregate | Thales Australia | Lew Horwood | Frank Pinyon | Bruce Kneebone |
| Day 4, 20@1200 | | Shane Courtney | Frank Pinyon | Bruce Kneebone |
| 1000 Yard Agg | | Philip Bain | Frank Pinyon | Bruce Kneebone |
| 1100 Yard Agg | | Lew Horwood | Ross Atherton | Bruce Kneebone |
| 1200 Yard Agg | Grenfell Armouring Services | Lew Horwood | Frank Pinyon | Bruce Kneebone |
| GRAND AGGREGATE | | 1st | 2nd | 3rd |
| Match Open | Herron Security & Sport | Lew Horwood | Philip Bain | Kerod Lindley |
| Match Reserve | Llarnoo Bull Power | Frank Pinyon | John Collis | Gerald Upchurch |
| F Class (Open) | Triple J Imports | Bruce Kneebone | Noel Osborn | Greg Warrian |
| Maloney Trophy | | Victoria | NSW | South Australia |
| Freebairn Teams | | Team Bain – Bain, Oddy, Rudduck, Daniel | Team Halloran – R. Halloran, Osborn, Mace, MacFarlane | Team Abbott – Abbott, M. Halloran, Hill, Allen |
| Rowlands Trophy | | NSW J. Oddy, G.Warrian, P.Bain, R.Halloran, M.Halloran, R.Rudduck | Victoria S. Courtney, N.Osborn, G.Dyson, L.Horwood, B.Southern, A.Blain | Queensland P. Hearle, P. Hill, K.Lindley, R.Atherton, J.Hausler, E.Daniel |
| President's Trophy | | G. Warrian & P. Bain | | |