



CMP Marksmanship 101 with Steve Cooper Season 1, Episode 3

Ashley 0:06

Welcome, listeners. We're so glad you're here with us. I don't know about you, but I am super excited that we're finally getting back to a routine a little bit here at the Civilian Marksmanship Program. During March, we fired off our first, our very first Talladega Spring Classic in Alabama. From what I heard, the weather was a little rough at times, but it was well worth it for our rifle and pistol competitors who were able to get back out on the range. Since we last talked, we also made some big announcements. One being our plan of action for the 2021 National Matches, which our employees are working very hard – and I mean very hard – to roll out. We missed everyone last year, so we'll be eager to get back out on the range. You know, get back to our regular Camp Perry schedule, as I'm sure everyone is eager to do, right? You can read all the details on that through our website, through the “News & Media” tab, or on our web page dedicated to the National Matches.

We also released some info on other upcoming highpower matches we have planned at Camp Perry throughout the year, as well as some info on the Camp Perry Open, which is usually held in January but was moved to, hopefully, warmer May. This turned out to be a happy switch for everyone because not only do competitors get to skip the cold Ohio weather of January, but we were able to add a smallbore match to accompany the event, so, be sure to get signed up for that. It's going to be a lot of fun. We got lots of other things starting up, so be sure to check out our website at www.thecmp.org, and see what we've got going on.

Today on the podcast, we're going to check in with Steve Cooper, CMP's training and education manager. He's the guy organizing one of our up-and-coming programs, the Marksmanship 101 courses. The program currently consists of two different options: Rifle Marksmanship 101 and Pistol Marksmanship 101. Both offer exceptional training on marksmanship fundamentals, with the help of tremendously qualified individuals – like members of Team CMP, who have several national-level titles and awards among them, and even members of the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit, also known as the AMU. The pistol courses are led by Jim Henderson, who is a retired member of the AMU and currently holds a slew of national records by his own merit. Just an excellent, excellent athlete. Jim is the CMP's pistol coordinator and has been hard at it –

enhancing the program with new matches and other ventures, including this Marksmanship 101 course. So, we're very, very glad to have him.

Marksmanship 101 courses are suited for absolutely anyone. Whether you are a seasoned competitor who wants the opportunity to learn more at the hands of some of today's most talented and experienced professionals, or if you've never picked up a firearm in your life – there's a spot for you at these courses. I know that most people who are listening to this podcast, you probably already have an interest in marksmanship and an appreciation for it. But that's okay. You can still take this course, and you'll certainly learn things you never knew before. And if you know someone who you think may want to learn more but are somewhat timid about it, have them take a listen to this podcast episode in particular because Steve gives a lot of excellent first-hand information about what you can expect from a CMP Marksmanship 101 course. The biggest thing you can anticipate is a comfortable, easygoing environment that is saturated in safety. And Steve really does a fantastic job of describing the ins and outs of what a participant in these courses will be experiencing, from the classroom portion to live fire, to the Excellence-In-Competition matches offered as part of the, the course as well.

A little about Steve Cooper – he's the perfect person to lead these courses. He's been involved with marksmanship his whole life and is someone who truly has an enthusiasm for the sport. You can find him at many of our outdoor events – guiding a clinic, working the line as a range officer or maybe even behind the trigger. He often competes at our events when he finds time to get away from his regular duties and is always elated to swap stories with like-minded individuals around him who are also out there, firing a few rounds and having a great time.

When I started at the CMP eight years ago, a complete marksmanship newbie, Steve really took me under his wing. He began by showing me around Camp Perry and discussing its history – something else he's also very educated on. And we happened to also travel to different CMP matches together around the country. At those, he really made a point to explain all of the terms and firearm basics that I had never been introduced to before. He even walked me through a few different matches and coached me on the range. I felt like I was accomplishing something I had no idea I could, with his help.

He didn't just do it because he didn't have anything else to do. He's certainly a busy guy. He did it because that's who he is at his core. Someone who genuinely cares about marksmanship and wants to share it with whomever he can. He was happy and excited to do it. I know a lot of what I know now, thanks to his kind-hearted compassion for a newcomer like me and also his enjoyment working for the CMP. He will undoubtedly do the same for you if you take these Marksmanship 101 courses. He'll greet you with a smile, work patiently with you – and you'll leave thinking you've just spent the afternoon with an old friend.

So, if you've ever been interested in, in growing your knowledge as a marksman or know someone who has been thinking about it, hang out with us here for a little bit. It's never too late to get involved, and we'll be discussing it all. Here's Marksmanship 101 with Steve Cooper.

Steve 5:27

Hey young lady! How you doing?

Ashley 5:28

Really well! Are you ready to talk some Marksmanship 101?

Steve 5:31

Whatever you want to do is fine with me. So – you're, you're the boss.

Ashley 5:35

I'm the boss. Alright, so why don't you tell us a little bit about yourself – your time here at the CMP and your experience in marksmanship?

Steve 5:45

Sure. I've been, I've been involved with the CMP since 2007. And back then I was working in the marketing industry, and I had a background in news editorial journalism. And that kind of bled into advertising and marketing because I had pretty decent communication skills. So I got hooked up with CMP after coming out to Camp Perry and going through some marksmanship programs through the Ohio Rifle and Pistol Association and went through the Small Arms School that CMP and the Army Marksmanship Unit put on every year at the National Matches. And so I kind of got hooked. And while I was here, I talked to some folks at CMP and told them what I do and ask them if there was anything I could ever do to help out with it – that I'd be happy to help out.

And, eventually, that happened. I got a call from Christine Elder in the communications area. And she said, "Let's talk." Long story short, I was part-time for about three years, and then in 2010, I went full-time. And that's a point when Gary Anderson, who's our Director of Civilian Marksmanship Emeritus – he's really been the communications and education driver here for a long time – when he decided to start backing away from a full-time job, then I kind of took on some of his responsibilities on the communications side. So, that's how I got here.

But in terms of marksmanship experience and that sort of thing, I've been shooting BB guns and pellet rifle since I was a kid. Of course, I grew up in suburban Cleveland, and there wasn't a lot of places where you could shoot rifles but out of town. So fortunately, I had relatives and other places that I could shoot my .22, eventually, and then later, more, more powerful rifles and that sort of thing in a safe environment. And just had a lot of fun with it. I just kind of gravitated toward it. My, my dad and brother were both in the Army and, and so back in the '60s, when I grew up, that was still a big deal. And being a boy, that period of time, kind of gravitated toward shooting and marksmanship and, you know, guy stuff like along those lines.

So, I brought all that forward and got, got married, had kids had to back off on marksmanship for a little bit. And then once the kids got older, they got involved. And so kind of rekindled my interest in marksmanship. And so between the CMP job, and the kids growing up, I got back into shooting again. And so, doing it right to this day, and, it's, it's been fun to work at a place

where I can still shoot. And I'm encouraged to go out and shoot and hang with the folks, and, and I'm really having a great time.

Ashley 8:16

On a personal level – that's something that I've always appreciated about you, Steve, is that you're someone who not only works in marksmanship, but you actually have a personal history with it as well. And from what I've noticed, in my own experience, working with you – traveling with you to different events – that passion that you have for the sport really projects and resonates with the competitors that you work with. You, you seem to connect with them through that level of common interest and make them feel at ease.

Steve 8:42

Well, thanks, Ashley. I appreciate that. It is, it is kind of neat to be immersed in something that you can actually participate in. And, and I learn things all the time. You know, I, I teach things, but I learn things at the same time – just talking to shooters and exchanging experiences. It's, it's been a lot of fun, really.

Ashley 9:05

It's a really neat, neat part about the sport. Just that camaraderie that you gain. Alright, so let's talk about the courses. What are the Marksmanship 101 courses, and how did this program develop?

Steve 9:11

Well, a couple years back, of course, we've – and I'm going to dial back to the Small Arms Firing School, which the Army Marksmanship Unit always has provided to us at the National Match level. And that's been for both pistol and rifle, where they basically teach – heck, at one time at Camp Perry, we had as many as 800 people in the class for rifle one year. But we always have several hundred that come out and learn just basic marksmanship skills for both rifle and pistol through the AMU. And so the program that the AMU was using, we thought hey, why can't we take that and use it in other places like in our new, relatively new, marksmanship park at Talladega and also on the road. So we thought, yeah, let's, let's develop this thing and instead of us calling it Small Arms Firing School, which is pretty much branded by the Army, we thought, let's, let's give it a name like Rifle and Pistol 101. And kind of treat it like maybe it's a college entry kind of a course, where perhaps we then have advanced ones, and the next one becomes 102 or 201, or something like that.

So the whole reason for doing that is giving it CMP branding, but it's really very much the same curriculum that the Army uses for the Small Arms Firing School. So we just thought, you know, it would be a good outreach for folks around the country who can't afford to come to Camp Perry or don't have the time to make the trip – so we can go to them. And that's all kind of part of our outreach that we've been doing by taking matches on the road. So in addition to that, this all started with our Travel Games and going to places like Arizona, Oklahoma and Vermont and other places around the country where we not only teach marksmanship now but also hold matches and have sales and, and those kinds of things.

Ashley 10:57

Great. And who can take these courses? Is it, is it limited to ages, experience levels, or can anyone take these?

Steve 11:03

So when we, when we talk about age groups, and we're talking about marksmanship – as you know, safety's a very important part of this. So, we want to make sure as far as an entry age level, that parents who may want to bring young people out with them, that if they feel pretty confident that their, their son or daughter can handle a firearm appropriately, they're physically strong enough to do it, have the patience and attention to detail that is required – we pretty much invite anyone who, who the parents think is capable of doing it. And then we sometimes need to make a judgment call as far as entry age. But for the most part, I'd say the youngest people that we see are maybe 12 to 14 years old, and then, and then on up. But in terms of other qualifications, it really boils down to just having patience, willing to listen and learn. And then we get plenty of other folks who have shooting experience. So, so that's, that's where it begins is if you have an interest in this and you want to take it seriously, then we welcome virtually everybody.

Ashley 12:08

So in your experience, talking to these people who are coming to these courses, what have you found are the reasons people are deciding to take them? And can you take these courses more than once?

Steve 12:19

Yeah, that's – your second question is a good one because it does tie in. We see new shooters and, and returning shooters come through these programs. And I know I've gone through the Small Arms Firing School probably four or five times myself, and, and I've gone back because every time I go back, I learn something in addition to the last time. So there's constantly change in this sport, and so, you can pick up new things. So it's kind of a progression. That's, that's pretty neat. Both on the provider side and the receiver side. I've had people take the same course over, maybe two or three times. And it's good to see them come back. And it's not like they're a burden. We have room in the classroom, and they're not taking up time. And it's kind of nice, nice to have folks stay interested, want to know more and maybe refresh things that they'd forgotten from the last time. You know, some people stray, they don't shoot for a period of time and they want to get refreshers and, and learn more. So, but, there's no limit to the number of times that folks want to come back and take the class.

Ashley 13:19

So you've got a variety of people coming – you know, new shooters...

Steve 13:23

Yep.

Ashley 13:24

Old shooters...

Steve 13:25

Yep. There's a young lady out there, her name is Shannon Moriarty. And I know her dad won't mind me giving her name because he's really proud of her. I think she's, she's maybe 11 or 12 years old. And you think, boy, 11-year-old, getting behind an AR-15 – that, that sounds kind of scary. But she is one of those young people that is kind of a phenom. Her dad watches over very carefully, and she has become quite the marksman. I occasionally see her name pop up online because he takes her all over the country to shoot, and she's even beaten him a few times. And so, she's a rare example of someone in that age group that can grasp this stuff right away. But a good example, nonetheless. But, at a young age, you can, you can do good things. That's, that's on the rare side. But I would say that most people that come into this are probably on the young side – maybe 15, 16 years old, more likely teenagers, and then on up. And we've also had some old timers come back, and we've actually had to help them or maybe modify their positions because they're not physically able to get into positions very easily anymore. So, we help out any way we can just so they can make it through the course in a safe manner, and have a good time and learn some things. So, the people are pretty cool.

Ashley 14:35

Alright. So walk us through the classroom portion of the of the course.

Steve 14:40

Okay.

Ashley 14:41

What can participants expect when they walk in the door?

Steve 14:43

Well, what we do is we start in the classroom. So it, it all depends. For instance, the Small Arms Firing School at Camp Perry is in an 800-seat auditorium. But when we take Rifle 101 or Pistol 101, which we'll be doing for the first time in Alabama, second week in March, so, we start in the classroom, and we talk about safety. And the classroom size can be anywhere from a small classroom to an auditorium. We've had as many as, for Rifle 101, we had 73 in a class last year in Illinois, and the club was big enough – they had, they had a big enough facility that with the COVID situation, we had enough social distancing space to do it. It was basically a gigantic barn – a nice one – but it was a big place, and we were able to spread out.

But, we start in the classroom and just talk about safety and the basics, and then we follow that up with instruction, live instruction, with just an empty rifle. We'll have a couple of demonstrators getting, go through all, all the positions without ammunition and dry fire, basically, and demonstrate how the rifle's held, and timing, and, and all those kinds of things that you go through when you shoot a match. So, it's a nice mix of classroom period and questions and answers. We don't make it too boring. We keep it moving. We have members,

either of the CMP rifle team with us or the Army Marksmanship Unit will also supply us with instructors as well, and they'll help out doing demonstrations and chipping in when there's questions.

So, it's a pretty nice mix – not just lecture, but discussion back and forth, and it enables us to get to all the questions and take care of them before we go out to the firing line. And so, you know, that lasts probably – the classroom portion, depending on how big the group is and how much time we have, we'll spend a couple hours in the classroom and then we'll head out and, and do some practice work and the instruction on the firing line in the afternoon. Sometimes we have to do it all in one day, so we'll do classroom, go to the firing line with instruction and then we'll hold a rifle match that day. In other cases, we do instruction, practice on one day, and then next day, we come back and shoot a match the following day. So, it all just depends on, on where we are, how much time we have and the space needed.

Ashley 16:55

And so the class, as you kind of mentioned – or, you did mention – it's led by, we have our own Team CMP members or, you know, other certified instructors that we have who help out, and also members of the Army Marksmanship Unit. And they're there, you're there one-on-one, face-to-face with these people. They're on the firing line with you, out on the range right next to you, helping you with your positioning and answering questions...

Steve 17:18

Absolutely.

Ashley 17:19

You have some of today's best marksmen out there, helping you out – it's just one of the coolest things.

Steve 17:25

Yeah, it is a real treat because most of these people are the best of the best – with honors, sir – to quote a movie – but they're, they're great. And they're really not egotistical. They, they understand their mission is to help, and so they share information freely. One example is Brandon Green, who's been a national champion and he's been lights out, set records, for quite some time now. And he, basically – he won't come out and say it, but what he's, what he's indicating is, “Hey, I'm going to tell you everything that I know about this sport and show you everything that I do – now go ahead and beat me with that information.” That's basically what they're doing. They're saying hey, we, we are a great example – an ambassador for the shooting sports – here's what we do. Now, go out there and try to duplicate that or replicate that. That's what's coming from them.

They will share incredible amounts of knowledge and, and show us how to do things. And it really is a perfect environment to learn in because you don't feel pressured, and you're getting great advice so, from the best. And I can't hold a candle to those guys as an instructor, but I learn something every time.

Ashley 18:34

I think you're being a little modest, Steve. You've been doing this for a while, and you definitely know what you're talking about!

Steve 18:35

Yeah, it's – when it comes time to put your finger on the trigger and make it all happen, I can do everything up to that point, but I can't guarantee that my, my eyes and brain are going to do their job and shoot X's and 10's all the time. But when I shoot, I still have fun, and I manage to hit the bullseye once in a while. Yeah. But working with those folks are – it's quite a, quite a privilege and pretty neat relationship that we have with them.

Ashley 18:55

Another part of the course – the real, we're-actually-keeping-score part – these matches that you get to participate in at the conclusion of the course, which is the M-16 for rifle, M-9 for pistol, Excellence-In-Competition, EIC, matches – why are those part of this Marksmanship 101 course?

Steve 19:17

It's important that we, you know – following the Small Arms Firing School, that, that we have – give instruction and just don't send people on their way and go home and try to figure it out or reproduce it, but to actually get a chance to go into a rifle or a pistol match and actually have to put everything together and see how well they can do it. And it's not so much about the outcome. In fact, we've had people that haven't even been able to finish a match because either they were intimidated or they were physically unable to finish, but most people finish.

But, but the reality is, is that we want them to have a, an opportunity to go through a match environment. They're shooting against the clock, they're shooting against themselves and shooting against other competitors. And so, we want them to feel that competitive atmosphere. That's, and I'm sure if the AMU were here, they could explain it the same way. It's immersing them in the sport. And rather than just giving them information, we want people to actually be able to use what they've learned in the last, in the last day or so and shoot in a competition. And if they don't score, well, it's no big deal.

At the end, it's, it's a great experience. And they can then go home and practice and enter another competition when they want to. But we don't, we don't heap a lot of pressure on the competitors, if they don't feel comfortable. We've had several people say that the classroom portion was fine, I don't want to shoot in a match for whatever reason that might be. Whether they're shy or they don't feel confident enough. But I would say that 95% of the people that go through the class actually will go ahead and shoot in the competition afterwards. And they learn a lot. And they learn a lot about themselves. And it really gets them fueled up to continue on in the sport.

Ashley 20:58

That's great. You know, firearms, obviously – big deal, potentially dangerous sort of sport. And I'm sure there are first timers out there who are, you know, apprehensive about getting behind the trigger. They want to do, but they're still a little nervous to do it. Having that option, like you were talking about, being able to choose, you know, do I want to do this – do I not want to do this – but having, also having the, those instructors and you and others on the line who are, are patient and are willing to walk through these things – I think that's one of the most important parts about these courses is, is the environment that you are able to do it in. It's comfortable, it's safe, but it makes you feel like you are in control. And you can do what you're comfortable with or not comfortable with. And it's all in fun and in learning.

Steve 21:46

Yep, that's, that's it in a nutshell. Well, like you say – we want people to be comfortable. And we want them to learn and feel good. And you just don't know why people take the course sometimes. We see people show up, and they, maybe they're elderly, or maybe they are children and, and others seem, maybe be a little frail or timid. Many of them surprise us though, and they're quite capable of doing it. But they do have the option to, to learn and just take it in in doses, however they want to use it.

We encourage everybody who wants to shoot in a match to go ahead and do it because it's a great experience. I think a lot of this goes back to safety and maybe apprehension about firearms in general. And really, it's, it's – I look at it as a sport and a science. And it's a matter of, you know, projecting something downrange that's going to go through a target. And in this case, we're talking about firearms that make noise and under a lot of power, send a bullet down there and it goes through a piece of paper. And so we train with safety in mind at all times. And we don't, we don't let anybody do anything that is going to get them in harm's way.

And so, we've got a pretty clean record of safety. That's number one. But I think after they've gotten behind the gun a little bit, and they understand that we're not going to rush them through it. And they follow our safety procedures and do one thing at a time, and no one is pressed to do anything under the gun, but in a controlled environment where everybody can feel safe. And it's neat to see people kinda go from apprehension to, “Hey, I can do this!” And they get confidence, and they start to roll with it. So that's, that's all part of the fun of the class.

Ashley 23:27

Right. And you touched on this – the most important reasoning behind the CMP. Creating this Marksmanship 101 program is educating the public on marksmanship safety, you know, that's one of the originating ideas behind the CMP's existence.

Steve 23:43

Yep, yep.

Ashley 23:44

So, the elements of this course – what are the specifics of safety that are that are covered in this course?

Steve 23:53

Well, A. is the very first time you see a firearm, we're going to treat everything like it's loaded. And we want to make sure that, that A. it isn't loaded, but we want to treat every firearm as if it were loaded. And so as soon as you put your hands on a firearm, we want to make sure that the action is open or the bolt is open, so that we can tell there's no ammunition in the gun. And we have a safety flag that we put in there that won't allow the bolt to close if there is a round of ammunition in the gun. And so, we start off with a safe gun to begin with. So when they come out of the case, they have a safety flag in them that indicates that that's a safe rifle or a pistol. That's where we start.

And we very methodically go through the process of how to keep it safe, where to point it, where not to point it – to treat that thing as if it is loaded at all times. Even if you know it's not, we always treat it that way. And we basically walk through that at the very beginning of the course. And we reinforce it on the firing line, and we remind them constantly during practice or anytime we do live fire that we need to keep muzzles pointed downrange and to always keep it out over the firing line. We don't want anybody walking around with a rifle or a pistol that doesn't have a safety flag in it. And we have line safety officers making sure that those things are happening.

So, we have a virtually one-to-one relationship, almost, with every shooter. We know that there are some seasoned shooters that come out and take this class, so we can let them kind of roll a little bit on their own. We still keep an eye on them, but the veteran shooters pretty much know the rules. But safety is the number one deal here. In the end, everybody stays safe and sends rounds downrange safely. And we have a good time.

Ashley 25:37

And expanding upon that, talking more about safety – you know, there's COVID – I don't know if you've heard of this COVID thing. But has that changed the way that the course is conducted? Or, what sort of things do you do in the course to adhere to those COVID regulations?

Steve 25:52

It's, it's interesting, because last March, in March of 2020, was the last time that we really had a big event that was out in Arizona, the Ben Avery Shooting Facility. And we had gotten done with our Small Arms Firing School, our Rifle 101 out there. And we had shot several other matches, wood gun matches, and we finished with a vintage sniper match. And so, as soon as that match was over, we were about halfway through our program, because we were about to go into high-end shooting with highpower rifles and whatnot for the second half of the week of competitions. And that's when we got the word that COVID was going to make us shut this thing down. So, we packed up our gear and came home. And we only finished with half of what we went to accomplish out there.

But, starting that day, when we when we had to quit, until – gosh, the only things that we've been able to do in 2020 were a couple of things at the Talladega Marksmanship Park that we controlled, and also air gun shooting in our ranges. But when we came back to do those events, we practiced social distancing. And the easiest thing to do with that is to space people out on the firing line so that we're at every other firing point, and everyone's wearing a mask, except for the shooter when they're in the process of actually going through a match and firing the rifle. And as soon as they come off the line, they're back, back in a mask again. So, COVID has changed things a little bit.

And it's good to see that we're making some progress with vaccines and maybe easing restrictions perhaps later this year. And, but we're very cognizant of the issue out there. And so, we're making sure that all of our range officers and personnel are wearing masks. And those people that can take their mask off is someone who is shooting. And as soon as they're done, they're back in a mask. So that, that's the way we handle it. That's what we'll continue doing going forward until the world feels safe about being in close quarters with people.

Ashley 27:42

And we're starting to see some glimpses of the pandemic winding down, hopefully.

Steve 27:47

Start, starting to ease up a little bit.

Ashley 27:49

Yep.

Steve 27:49

So we, we missed the whole National Matches last year, and many of our Travel Games had to be suspended. And so, we're looking forward to getting back on the horse again this year and doing some of those things. So we're planning on the National Matches this year. And already, you know, letting people know that we're probably going to be practicing social distancing on the firing line. So they're going to get choices of how much they want to shoot and whether or not we have to add relays or add days to a program in order to get everybody on the firing line who needs to get out there. So we're working through those issues right now.

Ashley 28:22

Yep. It's all learning process. You know, no one – no one knows how this goes.

Steve 28:28

That's right.

Ashley 28:28

Just doing what we can.

Steve 28:29

Yep, you got it.

Ashley 28:30

So luckily for these marksman, Marksmanship 101 courses – we're able to get back to some sort of a schedule. What are some upcoming class dates you have planned for 2021?

Steve 28:41

We're, we're heading back to Talladega for the Talladega Spring Classic. And that is, that is actually a new, that's a new match. And it's kind of a poor substitute for the Western Games. Because right now, we should be heading to Phoenix to put on the Western Games. So we're going to do the, the Talladega Spring Classic – about a week of shooting out there. And as part of that, we'll be doing both a Rifle 101 and a Pistol 101. And that'll be our first Pistol 101 that we're going to do. This will be the first the Pistol 101 will be – will mimic, basically, the Small Arms Firing School for pistol. But Jim Henderson, who was a member of the Army Marksmanship Unit pistol team, and, gosh, a world class pistol shooter – he's basically won every trophy there is to win in the military bullseye pistol world. And so, we're really ecstatic to have him on our staff part-time. And he's going to lead that class, and I will assist him with it. He's, he's a champion, and it's an outstanding opportunity for anyone that wants to get into pistol to, to be taught by this guy because he's, he's the real deal.

Ashley 29:42

That's another one of those – again, you have this opportunity to work alongside or, you know, shoot alongside some of the best that's ever been.

Steve 29:51

Yep, absolutely.

Ashley 29:53

Just a really cool part of this course. Yeah.

Steve 29:55

It may lead into other things. I don't, I don't know. But we need to do more things in pistol world. So, we're having discussions, and I'm excited about that.

Ashley 30:04

Absolutely. Room to grow.

Steve 30:05

So we're planning to do these at upcoming events. Hopefully Eastern Games in April we'll be able to do, and, and then we'll come back and hopefully be doing the National Matches in, in July and August. And maybe a little bit of something at the tail end of June before we get into the National Matches. But Rifle 101 and Pistol 101 are on the books, and everything is a go at this point in time.

Ashley 30:27

That's great. Take what we can get.

Steve 30:29

And so, as the year will progress, we'll, we'll roll with the National Matches, and then after that we'll have events in there, scheduled right now for Oklahoma and in Vermont in the fall, and hopefully be going back to our regularly-scheduled Talladega 600 in November. Each of those will have marksmanship courses tied to them, so looking forward to that.

Ashley 30:52

Right. And will you be at all those events?

Steve 30:55

That's my plan, yep. At this point in time, I expect to be there.

Ashley 30:59

So is there anything else you'd like to tell us about the Marksmanship 101 courses?

Steve 31:04

Gosh, we just encourage people to come out and give it a try. If you have an inkling you, you feel like you've always wanted to do something like that but maybe were too shy or too intimidated, or just thought, "No – I don't know if this is a safe thing." – we can, we can rest your mind at ease that you're going to have a good time. You're going to be in a safe environment, and it's going to be a great experience for you. And so, we're really looking forward to seeing folks again on the firing line and help people learn. Help people learn that the basics of firearms, marksmanship – and just sending those rounds downrange and hitting the center of the target as much as we can. And learn from those experiences and have a good time with it, and have stories to tell to your friends and family and kids. Keep the, keep the sport rolling.

Ashley 31:53

These, these courses are excellent opportunities for individuals to ease their way into marksmanship or to maybe learn more about a sport that they thought they knew. So, I think I speak for everyone when I say thank you, Steve, for all the work you've put into refining them and carrying their important lessons across the country for so many people to be able to experience and enjoy.

Steve 32:14

Well it's, it's a privilege for me because I'm having a ball. I really enjoy it. I love to see people go through this process, and they walk away with a smile on their face or, "Wow, I never knew I could do that before!" It's just, it's just a really neat thing to see. It's, it's a side of education that a lot of people don't see – where you can have immediate impact. Someone can go out there and try something and, my gosh, they had a ball. Maybe they only hit the center of the target

once or twice, but they, they got the basics down, and they had fun doing it and know they can do better the next time. So that's, that's a big deal to me, is just to see people happy walk away with a great experience.

Ashley 32:52

And if anyone has any questions about the course, who should they contact?

Steve 32:57

Greatest thing to do is to go online and go to thecmp.org and nose around on there a little bit. And then if they want to talk, they want to talk to us – they can call us, email us. All of our information's out there, and we'll be happy to talk to them. So, I take calls all the time from folks, and, be happy to chat and, or, email, anytime. So, our information is out on our website, and again that's www.thecmp.org, and a great place to find information out there.

Ashley 33:29

Not just for this but for the many, many, many things we have going on.

Steve 33:33

That's for sure.

Ashley 33:34

Alright, well, thank you so much, Steve, for all that you do. And thank you for giving us a deeper look into these Marksmanship 101 courses.

Steve 33:42

My pleasure, Ashley. And it's great talking to you.

Ashley 33:35

You too. Be safe traveling around this year.

Steve 33:46

Good deal.

Ashley 33:52

Hopefully this podcast answered all of your questions you may have had about what you can expect from a CMP Marksmanship 101 course, and hopefully it was enough to get you motivated about taking the course for yourself. It really is a fun and unique opportunity. I've sat through many of these myself and can personally attest to the outstanding level of education you'll receive and the great time you'll have doing it. Lots of smiles I see out there.

But, as Steve said – if you'd like to know more, visit our website at www.thecmp.org and scroll over our “Education” tab. There, you can find not only the info on our Marksmanship 101 courses, but all of the educational opportunities the CMP offers. So thank you again to Steve – always a pleasure.

And for those out there listening – if you find the time, we would love if you could tell us what you think about these podcasts, or let us know any suggestions of topics you'd like to hear. You can email me directly – I'm Ashley – at abrugno – that's – an Italian name – a b r u g n o n e @ thecmp.org with any questions or comments you may have. I would truly be happy to hear from you. That does it for this podcast. Stay safe out there, everyone!

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>