



ON THE MARK

THE NEWSLETTER FOR COACHES AND JUNIOR SHOOTERS © FALL 2021

The Women Are Here, For the Record...

Haley Robinson Collects Four New Records at 2021 National Rifle Matches

Learn More:

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- JROTC, CMP Postals
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- National Matches Educational Clinics

Featuring:

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Results On:

- CMP 3P Air Rifle Nationals
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ON THE MARK

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ON THE MARK is published quarterly by the Civilian Marksmanship Program. It is dedicated to disseminating news and information about junior shooting activities to leaders and coaches of junior shooting clubs, teams and camps. Its primary purpose is to help youth shooting leaders teach firearms safety and marksmanship more effectively.

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The **Civilian Marksmanship Program** is a non-profit organization chartered by the U. S. Congress to promote marksmanship training and firearm safety, with a primary emphasis on youth. The CMP is authorized to receive and sell surplus government rifles and ammunition that are suitable for marksmanship. Proceeds from these sales are dedicated to CMP programs. CMP enabling legislation requires that its highest priority must be given to "activities that benefit firearms safety, training and competition for youth." **ON THE MARK** is a vital part of CMP efforts to fulfill its mission to serve and develop junior shooting in the United States.

Information about the CMP may be viewed on the CMP web site, www.thecmp.org or on the CMP online newsletter, **The First Shot**, at <https://thecmp.org/news-media/the-first-shot/>.

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- © **CMP Oklahoma Games in October.** The Oklahoma CMP Games, firing Oct. 17-24, 2021, includes two CMP 800 Aggregate Matches followed by a 4-Man Team Match and an EIC Service Rifle Match along with Rifle and Pistol Marksmanship 101, Garand/Springfield/Vintage/Modern Military, Carbine, Rimfire Sporter and Vintage Sniper Team events. There are also several pistol matches for competitors to fire in including the As-Issued 1911 Pistol Match, Military & Police Service Pistol Match, 40 Shot Pistol Match, EIC Service Pistol Match, CMP .22 Rimfire Pistol EIC Match and Pistol 2-Man Team Match. Learn more here: <https://thecmp.org/cmp-matches/cmp-games-oklahoma/>.
- © **Monthly Air Gun Matches in Ohio and Alabama.** The CMP's Monthly Matches are set to return with a mix of air gun events for all ages and experience levels in October and November. Each Monthly Match is held simultaneously at the South CMP Competition Center in Anniston, Alabama, and at the Gary Anderson CMP Competition Center at the Camp Perry National Guard Training Facility in Ohio. The events includes a Junior 3×20, Junior 3×10, 60 Shot Air Rifle Standing and 60 Shot Air Pistol. Read more on the CMP website at <https://thecmp.org/sign-up-now-for-cmps-fall-monthly-air-rifle-and-air-pistol-matches/>.
- © **CMP Summer Camp Venue 2022 Search.** Attention Junior Clubs! We're in search of venues to host our popular Junior Rifle Camps for the summer of 2022. Is yours a good fit? The camps, which are a mix of intermediate to advanced marksmanship training for Smallbore and Air Rifle athletes, require a location that: holds ample space for targets/firing points/group training; is in close proximity to airports/hotels and includes existing internet accessibility. To be considered, you may review and submit the Camp Venue Application on the CMP website at <https://thecmp.org/youth/junior-air-rifle-camps-and-clinics/application-to-host-a-cmp-summer-camp/>. We hope you'll join in on this fun and valuable opportunity for your club and youth athletes in your area!
- © **Dixie Double Returns Nov. 4-6, 2021.** Registration is now open for the CMP's 12th annual Dixie Double Air Rifle and Air Pistol Competition at the South Competition Center in Alabama. The event includes 60 Shot matches for both juniors and adults. Learn more here: <https://thecmp.org/sign-up-today-for-cmps-2021-dixie-double-air-gun-event/>.
- © **Talladega 600 Rifle and Pistol Event Fires Nov. 15-21, 2021.** The Talladega 600, set at CMP's own Talladega Marksmanship Park in Alabama, is open to enthusiasts of all ages, disciplines and experience levels – offering several popular recreation-oriented rifle and pistol matches as well as educational opportunities. Learn more at <https://thecmp.org/cmp-matches/talladega-600/>.
- © **Day of Clays at Talladega in November.** The Talladega Marksmanship Park in Alabama will host the MidwayUSA Foundation's "Day of Clays," Nov. 19, 2021. The day of competition, games and prizes will be conducted within Talladega's shotgun area and includes a four-person clays tournament as well as side challenges like Wobble and Long Bird. Entry fees are \$20. All donations made to the MidwayUSA Foundation, a non-profit organization, will be matched with an ADDITIONAL \$20,000 in matching funds available to match registration and side game entries. Learn more about the event and the generosity of the MidwayUSA Foundation by visiting <https://www.midwayusafoundation.org/doc/>.



On the Cover: Haley Robinson, 21, of Mill Spring, North Carolina, set four new national records during the 2021 National Rifle Matches. She earned High Junior and High Woman records in the President's Rifle Match before recording more in the NTI and Aggregate events. Full story on page 24. Photo courtesy of U.S. AMU

Tokyo Olympic Shooting Sports Results

Through awards and placings, the USA Shooting team earned its best Olympic showing since the 1964 Tokyo Games – leaving the 2021 Tokyo event with six medals in tow.

Among those were three gold medals produced from Men's Air Rifle, Women's Skeet and Men's Skeet, two silvers in Mixed Team Air Rifle and Women's Trap, as well as one bronze in Mixed Team Trap. This year marked the third time USA Shooting has won six medals since 1964, with the 1984 Team winning three gold, one silver and two bronze in Los Angeles and the 2008 Team winning two gold, two silver and two bronze medals in Beijing.

Will Shaner, an athlete with the University of Kentucky, won the first gold for USA Shooting in Tokyo in Men's 10-meter Air Rifle and, at age 20, is the youngest USA Shooting athlete to medal in an Olympic rifle event. Shaner is also the only gold medalist for the event in Team USA's history.

Along with six Olympic Medals, USA Shooting recorded other incredible showings throughout the Games, with three shotgun athletes falling short of the finals by a single target, rifle competitors reaching three 6th place finishes and a 5th place finish and Men's Air Pistol athlete James Hall finishing 10th overall – missing the final by just one point.

Several Team USA athletes also competed in the Tokyo Paralympics. The "Magnificent Seven" included McKenna Geer, Taylor Farmer, Jaz Almlie-Ryan, YanXiao Gong, Kevin Nguyen, John Joss and Stetson Bardfield.

Additionally, USA Shooting's National Rifle Coach who travelled to Tokyo, Dan Durben, announced his

retirement after 12 total years with the team. Durben's career as an athlete and coach has spanned more than 40 years. Early on, he spent time as both a biathlon and rifle competitor before walking on to the Eastern Kentucky University NCAA Rifle Team and graduating in 1982. He went on to become a National Champion in Smallbore and Air Rifle and a World Champion in Air Rifle in 1987, followed by an Olympic showing in 1988.

After becoming the National Rifle Coach from 1997 to 2000, he led the Olympic team at the Sydney Games. He was also the Paralympic National Coach from 2003 to 2008, traveling to both the Athens and Beijing Games. Before returning to his National Rifle Coach title in 2019, Durben served as the director of the CMP's Three-Position Air Rifle Summer Camps for several years and is one of the notable figures in helping the program reach the outstanding reputation and popularity it holds today. Durben's retirement will take effect in January 2022.

Congratulations to all Team USA athletes, and good luck to Coach Durben in his next chapter!



Dan Durben

Team USA 2021 Tokyo Games Medals

GOLD:

Will Shaner, Men's 10m Air Rifle
Amber English, Women's Skeet
Vincent Hancock, Men's Skeet

SILVER:

Lucas Kozeniesky & Mary Tucker, Mixed Team 10m Air Rifle
Kayle Browning, Women's Trap

BRONZE:

Brian Burrows & Maddy Bernau, Mixed Team Trap

National Matches 2021 Junior Leaders

In pistol, Abbie Leverett, 18, Bainbridge, Georgia, took home several High Junior honors (.22 Rimfire Pistol, Pistol Warm-Up Any Sight, .22 Rimfire EIC, .22 Rimfire Pistol, .22 Rimfire Pistol Junior Aggregate, EIC Service Pistol, Junior EIC, National Trophy Individual Junior Individual) along with High Civilian in the .22 Pistol and .22 Rimfire matches. Dustin Carr, 19, San Diego, California, also claimed multiple pistol High Junior titles (GLOCK Match Stock, Junior President's Pistol).

Carr went on to earn rifle titles as well including within three of the four Garand/Springfield/Vintage/Modern Military events fired during the National Games matches. Carr is the current junior national record holder in the Vintage Military Match. Andrew Beaver, 19, of Indianapolis, Indiana, claimed the fourth event – clearing a score of 279-3X in the Modern Military Match.

Haley Robinson, 21, of Mill Spring, North Carolina, set several new national records during the 2021 National Rifle Matches. During the President's Rifle event, she fired a score of 395-15X to earn new High Junior and High Woman records – finishing seventh overall. She was also the only junior to appear in the 20-person shootoff that accompanies the President's Match. Robinson went on to set a new Women's Rifle Trophy national record score of 496-25X in the National Trophy Individual Match – finishing 10th overall out of a field of almost 800 competitors that included several decorated civilian and military athletes.

Mason White, 17, of Sandy, Oregon, earned a new set of national records as High Civilian and High Junior with his score of 498-15X – only 10 X's shy of the Muske's leading score. White earned fifth place overall in the match. He also performed well in the President's Rifle Match, finishing 54th out of over 830 competitors and earning a President's Tab as one of the Top 100 competitors of the event. In the National Trophy Junior Team (NTJT) match, he was the fourth-highest scoring individual competitor. The combination of his NTI, President's and NTJT showings led to White earning a new aggregate Col. Bill Deneke Trophy national record score of 1282-46X.

The duo of Dustin Carr and Amber Kingshill, a.k.a. CA Grizzlies Team Leupold, made marks, too, as they fired a new National Trophy Junior Team record score of 992-



Abbie Leverett



Mason White

49X. The pair crushed the previous record of 979-39X, set by fellow Grizzlies back in 2016.

Kingshill not only led the team but was also the highest scoring junior individual of the match, recording 498-29X on her own.

Carr and Kingshill teamed up with other Grizzlies Zack McLain, Simone George, Andrew Van Hoven and Anton Van Hoven to add yet another national record to the junior club's legacy. Team O'Connell, as they were called, fired a score of 1329 in the NTIT to net fifth overall and a new national record for the Magnificent Seven Junior Infantry Team Trophy.

Anton Van Hoven, McLain, Kevin George, Kingshill, Carr and Simone George (Team Hollis) combined forces to also reach a new national record as the High Junior team in the NTT, earning a score of 2940-92X and the Minuteman Trophy.

M'Leah Lambdin, 18, of Colorado Springs, Colorado, earned multiple 60 Shot Air Rifle awards including High Woman and High Junior honors for her score of 619.4 in the event. High Junior of the 60 Shot Air Pistol Match was Mehr Chanda, 13, of Coppell, Texas, with 546-8X.

In Smallbore, Bremen Butler, 16, of Fort Wayne, Indiana was the overall competitor in the Three-Position Aggregate. With her score of 2229-50X, Butler came in fourth overall in the Open competition. The Freedom's Fire was claimed by the two-person team of Ryan and Tyler Wee, with a combined score of 1120-31X. Kayla Andreoli, 19, of Washington, Pennsylvania, led the Junior Prone Aggregate with a score of 6374-420X.

See all results on the CMP website at <https://thecmp.org/competitions/matches/cmp-national-matches/>.

National Matches Top Juniors

National Pistol:

Pistol 2700 Aggregate, Any

Sight: Ethan Clark, 17, Mount Vernon, Ohio – 2474-66X

.22 Pistol 4-Man Team: ANJRPC

NJ Junior Gold (Justin Kopecky, Blake Jankowski, Devin LaCross, Bailey Shafer) – 1070-21X

Center Fire Pistol 4-Man Team:

Texas State Rifle Association (Austin Stone, Cayden Holland, Charisma Owen, Mehr Chanda) – 1038-20X

.45 Pistol 4-Man Team: ANJRPC

NJ Junior Gold (Justin Kopecky, Blake Jankowski, Devin LaCross, Bailey Shafer) – 1032-17X

Overall Individual Junior

Pistol: Devin LaCross, 19, Jackson, New Jersey – 855-12X

National Trophy Team Junior

Team: Texas State Rifle Association White (Austin Stone, Charisma Owen) – 518-3X

Rifle Games:

National M1 Carbine: Madelyn

Schnelle, 14, Crawfordsville, Indiana – 344-1X

Springfield M1A: Thomas

McGowan, 16, Hortonville, Wisconsin – 364-8X

Rimfire Sporter:

T-Class: Connor Stout, 19, Waterford, Michigan – 584-16X

TU Class: Eric Woods, 17, Conneaut, Ohio – 573-12X

O-Class: Ditsy Werner, 17, Kennesaw, Georgia – 517-8X

National Smallbore:

Three-Position (3x40) Aggregate Championship:

Bremen Butler, 16, Fort Wayne, Indiana – 2229-50X
M'Leah Lambdin, 18, Colorado Springs, CO – 2221-64X
Andrew Duross, 17, Marlborough, Massachusetts – 2218-57X

Three-Position (3x40) Iron Sight Championship:

M'Leah Lambdin, 18, Colorado Springs, CO – 1100-30X
Bremen Butler, 16, Fort Wayne, Indiana – 1093-22X
Emme Walrath, 15, Kenosha, Wisconsin – 1089-27X

Three-Position (3x40) Any Sight Championship:

Andrew Duross, 17, Marlborough, Massachusetts – 1136-39X
Bremen Butler, 16, Fort Wayne, Indiana – 1136-28X
Kayla Andreoli, 19, Washington, Pennsylvania – 1131-46X

Freedom's Fire Team Match:

Overall: Ryan & Tyler Team (Tyler Wee, Ryan Wee) – 1120-31X

At-Large: The Cult (Victoria Kopelen, Bremen Butler) – 1123-31X

Three-Position Team Championship:

Overall (High Junior, High State Association): Illinois State Rifle Association (Anthony Hotko,



Prone 6400 Aggregate Championship:

Kayla Andreoli, 19, Washington, Pennsylvania – 6374-420X
Anthony Hotko, 17, Batavia, Illinois – 6373-441X
Jacob Day, 16, Columbus, Georgia – 6367-449X

Prone Iron Sight Championship:

Anthony Hotko, 17, Batavia, Illinois – 3184-213X
Kayla Andreoli, 19, Washington, Pennsylvania – 3182-203X
Brady Fowkes, 17, Mayport, Pennsylvania – 3181-196X

Prone Any Sight Championship:

Jacob Day, 16, Columbus, Georgia – 3198-258X (second overall)
Benjamin D'Angelo, 18, Jamestown, New York – 3193-239X
Kayla Andreoli, 19, Washington, Pennsylvania – 3192-217X

Prone Team Championship:

Lafayette Gun Club (Brandon Evans, Victoria Koenig, Maria Koenig, Matthew Stout) – 1587-98X

A WINNING KNEELING POSITION

DEVELOPING A WINNING KNEELING POSITION

By Gary Anderson, DCM Emeritus



2018 World Championship Men's 50m 3x40 Rifle Final

Kneeling is now the first position fired in ISSF three-position events. This photo shows the kneeling positions used by the top eight athletes at the start of the 2018 World Championship 50m 3x40 Rifle Men final. The athletes are (from l. to r.) Croatia, Belarus, P. R. China, Australia, Poland, USA, Norway and P. R. China.

The origins of kneeling as a target rifle firing position go back more than 2,000 years. From Xian China's 3rd century BCE terracotta warriors that protected the first Chinese emperor in the afterworld to combat firing positions used in 18th and 19th century military operations, kneeling became a target rifle firing position that, like virtually all modern sports skills, traces its origins to human efforts to practice martial or survival skills.

Kneeling became a standard target rifle firing position in the late 19th century when it was adopted as one of three positions in the 300-meter free rifle course of fire. Kneeling is now the first of three positions fired in ISSF 50- and 300-meter 3x40 rifle events. For junior rifle athletes, kneeling is the third of the positions fired in Three-Position

Air Rifle events.

In today's three-position rifle events, the best men and women athletes shoot kneeling scores that are nearly as high as their prone scores. In the 2021 Tokyo Olympics, the top eight men averaged 393.125 kneeling compared to 397.75 prone. The top eight women averaged 392.50 kneeling compared to 395.63 prone. In this summer's National Junior Olympic Three-Position Air Rifle Championship, the top 10 athletes averaged 198.7 kneeling compared to 199.2 prone. Those scores support the conclusion that winning rifle athletes must develop kneeling positions capable of producing prone-like holds and scores.

Those statistics, nevertheless, should not deceive anyone into thinking that developing a winning kneeling position is easy. Kneeling has a smaller area of support limited to the left foot, right foot, and right knee. Its center of gravity (COG) is mid-way between the COGs of prone and standing. And with so many possible position adjustments, it is certainly the most complicated position.

Developing a winning kneeling position depends upon building a kneeling position that adheres to a series of “Position Features” and then working out “Position Adjustments” that determine the final position. One of the best ways to start this endeavor is to study the positions used by the world’s best. First, consider the features identified in the “*Kneeling Position Features*” illustration (on right). Then study the six positions in the “*Olympic Medalists’ Kneeling Positions*” illustration on page 10. Those illustrations should give you a clear mental image and understanding of how to configure a fundamentally sound kneeling position.

Kneeling Position Fundamentals

This article starts with a detailed discussion of the kneeling position fundamental features.* If you are building a new position from start or rebuilding a kneeling position that has not worked well, an excellent way to begin is to first work out your position without a rifle and sling, and then add the rifle and sling after the body configuration is established. Here are the steps, in order, that should be followed in developing a winning kneeling position.

1. Kneeling Roll Size and Placement. Getting into a kneeling position begins with the kneeling roll and its placement on the floor (*Do not use a shooting mat; check the photos of champion athletes — none of them use shooting mats.*). Start with a kneeling roll that is loosely filled so that the body-rifle position will be lower. Turn the roll so that when the right leg kneels on it, the leg points 50 to 80 degrees away from the line of fire.

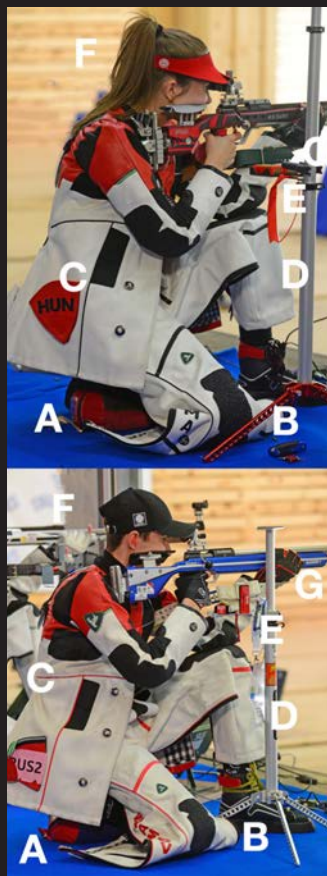
2. Sitting on the Kneeling Roll. The correct right leg placement on the kneeling roll requires 1) keeping the right foot vertical (*do not turn the foot at an angle*), 2) extending the toes so the top of the foot contacts the floor, 3) placing the lower leg so it is supported at or just above the ankle, and 4) sitting on the heel so it is centered on the buttocks.

3. Body Position on Right Heel. Most top kneeling competitors sit with all or most of their body weight back on their right heel. They relax their shoulders and upper spine down (*do not use muscles to keep the spine straight*). Their shoulders and hips are aligned (*twisting the torso creates unnecessary tension*).



The origin of the kneeling position is more than two-thousand years old. Many of Xian, China's 8,000 terracotta warriors were posed in this kneeling position.

KNEELING POSITION FEATURES



- A. Torso sits on erect heel supported by the kneeling roll.
- B. Body (hips and shoulders) is turned 50 to 80 degrees from the line of fire.
- C. Torso weight rests on right heel; shoulders and spine are relaxed down.
- D. Left leg supports rifle and left arm; left leg is vertical or angled forward – never back.
- E. Left elbow is placed on leg or knee while keeping body weight balanced over heel.
- F. Head is erect.
- G. Rifle height is adjusted with left hand position on fore arm so that sights come up to eye level.

* All position descriptions in this article are for right-handed athletes. For left-handers, simply reverse right and left.

A WINNING KNEELING POSITION

A trend in the last decade has been to turn the body more to the side (*with the right leg pointing 70-80 degrees away from the target*) so that the rifle shoots across the body.

4. Left Leg Location. The lower left leg supports the weight of the left arm and rifle. The left heel is the forward balance point for the position and should be located just to the left of a point directly below the rifle (see “Kneeling Position Balance” illustration). The left lower leg should be vertical or angled forward (*do not angle the leg to the rear*).

5. Left Arm Location on Left Leg. To determine where to place the left elbow on the leg, start with the upper body in a natural, relaxed position with its weight back on the heel. Without moving the body, extend the arm and let it drop down onto the knee or leg. If the elbow falls on the knee, leave it there; if it falls behind the knee (*do not lean further forward to reach the knee*), leave it there because that is where the upper body will be most relaxed.

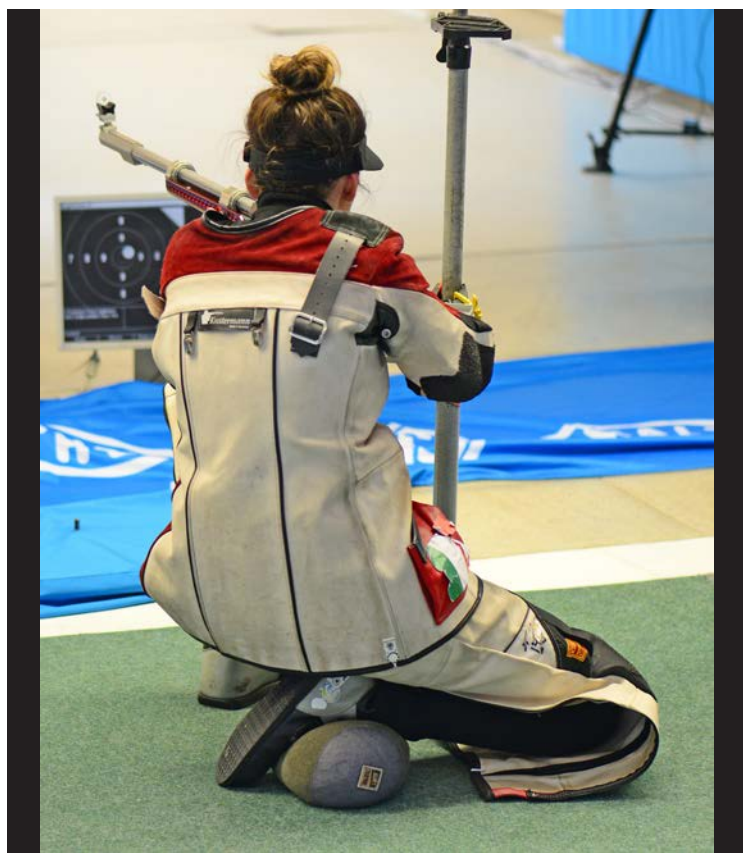


A loosely filled kneeling roll with a depression in the center lowers the position's COG and helps to support the lower leg.

6. The Rifle Position, Head and Sling. The next step is to determine how the rifle will be held. If you are developing a new position, shoulder the rifle first without the sling and hand stop. Hold your head in an erect, relaxed position, move your left hand forward or to the rear to raise or lower the rifle sights until they align with the aiming eye. All rifles used in junior three-position shooting today have butt-plates with vertical adjustments so as you raise the rifle to eye level, it is also necessary to adjust the butt-plate up or down to keep it centered on the shoulder. With rifle sights at eye level,

lock the butt-plate in place, then slide the hand stop back against the left hand and secure it to mark that adjustment. Finally, add the sling. Place it high on the arm and start with it loose. Gradually tighten the sling until it takes over the work of holding the rifle (*left arm muscles must be completely relaxed*).

7. Right Hand and Arm. The main functions of the right hand and arm are to operate the trigger and reload



Correct Body Position: Body weight is back on the heel; the right foot is vertical and the ankle rests on the kneeling roll.



Left Leg and Arm Positions: With the body erect, the left elbow may fall behind or on the knee (A); rifle height is determined by the left lower leg angle (B) and/or the left-hand location on the forearm (C).

the rifle. The arm can be relaxed down but special care must be taken to keep the wrist straight as the hand grasps the pistol grip. It must position the index finger so that it presses the trigger straight to the rear. After becoming comfortable with the position, learn to reload the rifle while keeping it in the shoulder. Adjusting stock length may be necessary to comfortably reach the loading port or breech end of an air rifle barrel. Also, have a plan for taking breaks after 10 or 20 shots when the rifle comes down from the shoulder.

8. Position Balance. A key to kneeling position stability is balancing the position so that minimal muscle effort is applied to maintain the position. Kneeling is said to have three points of support, the right foot resting on the kneeling roll, the left foot, and the right knee, but the right knee should not be used as a primary support. Kneeling has two primary support and balance points, 1) the right heel and kneeling roll that support the torso, and 2) the left heel and foot that support the rifle and left arm. Proper balance technique calls for finding the neutral balance point over those two points and then shifting the position just slightly off-balance.

Perfecting the Position

After you establish a basic position, there is still a lot of work to do to perfect it. You need to practice the position, but also to refine the position by evaluating how it performs and then deciding what position adjustments to make to fine-tune the position.

- **Position Preparation.** Before getting into position with shooting trousers, the fly should be open to relieve pressure on the abdomen. Leg zippers are open to eliminate bending the legs over trouser folds. Shooting jackets should be buttoned at the top two or three buttons only.

An important step in perfecting the kneeling position is having precise plans for getting into position, shouldering the rifle, and reloading. Shouldering the rifle and resuming the position for successive shots must involve minimized, consistent movements. To start each shot, there should be a brief conscious effort to relax the body and left arm. This is usually done in conjunction with the breathing process.

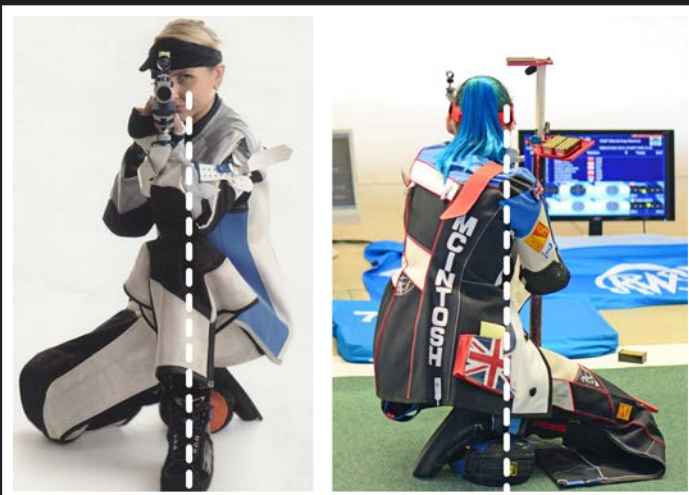
- **Evaluating the Position.** Perfecting a kneeling position starts with evaluating it. The first criterion is how good is the hold that it produces (*the magnitude of front sight movements while aiming*) -- how long does the hold last and how difficult is it to keep it centered. This evaluation can be done by live and dry fire shooting. Electronic training devices like the Scatt™ system may provide even more objective data on hold movements and their duration.

LOADING IN KNEELING



Athletes should learn to reload in kneeling while keeping their rifles in their shoulders. Use a rifle stand to hold pellets or cartridges where they can easily be reached.

KNEELING POSITION BALANCE



These front and rear views of kneeling positions show how the position should be balanced. The dashed white lines designate how the weight of the body-rifle system should be balanced over the left heel and right foot.

A WINNING KNEELING POSITION

OLYMPIC MEDALISTS' KNEELING POSITIONS

The photos on this page show the kneeling positions used by 2016 and 2021 Olympic medal winners in the 50m 3x40 Rifle events. Note how, except for Zhang, all other medalists keep their body weight back on their right heel and kneeling roll. All positions are relatively open with bodies turned 60-70 degrees away from the line of fire. Their left elbows are either on the left knee or slightly behind the knee. Two keep their left lower legs vertical; the others extend the left foot further forward.



Changhong Zhang, China
2021 Olympic gold medal



Yulia Zytkova, Russia
2021 Olympic silver medal



Yulia Karimova, Russia
2021 Olympic bronze medal



Nicco Campriani, Italy
2016 Olympic gold medal



Barbara Engleder, Germany
2016 Olympic gold medal



Sergey Kamenskiy, Russia
Olympic silver – 2016, 2021

• **Inner Position Evaluation.** In kneeling, hold movements and poorer scores are often caused by conflicting tensions within the body. You can discover them by evaluating your inner position, that is, by sensing how different parts of your body feel and function while you attempt to hold the rifle still while aiming. It is possible to gain some insight into how muscles feel and function while dry firing or shooting, but a more effective way to evaluate the inner position is to do holding exercises in kneeling while aiming at a blank wall or blank target. Some athletes will even set up their kneeling positions in a dark room to evaluate their inner positions.

In kneeling, the body must remain calm and relaxed, with only minimal muscle efforts being made to hold the rifle steady on the target. Hold and inner position evaluations help to identify muscle groups that feel tense, strained, or uncomfortable while holding the body and rifle on the target. By identifying those points, position adjustments can be made to eliminate or reduce them.

Kneeling Position Adjustments

The complexity of the kneeling position comes not only from the way the body is configured to get into a legal position but also from the many different position adjustments that can be made. Working out a position that performs best for each athlete is a process of making fine tuning adjustments to evolve a final position. Every adjustment should be based on prior evaluations and be carefully planned. When experimenting with position adjustments, it is important to understand how several of these adjustments have counter effects that must also be considered. Kneeling position adjustments include the following:

• **Kneeling Roll Height.** Adding or removing filling to the kneeling roll can raise or lower the torso. Using a smaller kneeling roll is generally recommended but some athletes use a higher bag to alleviate foot comfort issues. Changing kneeling roll height must also be accompanied by adjusting the left-hand location on the forearm and sling length to raise or lower the rifle in the same direction that the torso goes up or down.

• **Right Leg Angle and Body Position.** A couple of decades ago, kneeling position instruction stressed more open body positions where, as in prone, the body faced toward the target with the right leg turned only 30 to 45 degrees from the target. Recent kneeling instruction has advocated so-called closed positions where the body is turned further away from the target with the right leg pointing 60 to as much as 90 degrees away from the target. With most of today's great kneeling scores being produced by athletes who favor the latter variation, with the body



A classic modern kneeling position—the product of countless hours in evaluations and on the range. The athlete is former University of Kentucky star Henrik Larsen of Norway. His kneeling score of 398 in the Tokyo Olympics Men's 3x40 event was the highest kneeling score fired there.



Left hand and/or sight height adjustments must align the sights with the aiming eye while the head remains erect.

turned away from the target, athletes who have been using a more open position may want to experiment with turning their bodies further away from the target.

A WINNING KNEELING POSITION

THE LOW KNEELING POSITION



Two examples of successful low kneeling positions. The athletes are Stine Nielsen, Denmark (top) and Bremen Butler, 2021 National Smallbore Matches Junior Champion.

• **Body Weight Distribution.** The weight of the body can be shifted from keeping all or almost all body weight back on the right heel to placing some upper body weight on the left knee or leg by extending the left elbow further forward on the leg. The “Olympic Medalists’ Kneeling Positions” on page 10 show a clear preference for keeping body weight back on the right heel but Olympic 3x40 rifle gold medalist Changhong Zhang’s position has some of his body weight supported further forward on his left leg.

• **Left Lower Leg Position.** This decision depends mostly on the relative lengths of an individual athlete’s torso, legs, and arms. Athletes whose legs and/or arms are proportionately longer than their torsos usually must extend their left foot further forward. As that is done, rifle height may need to be raised by shifting the left hand to the rear and shortening the sling.

• **Left Elbow Location on the Left Leg.** The proper technique for determining left elbow location on the left

leg is to first get the upper body in a relaxed position and then drop the left arm as it holds the rifle down onto the knee or leg. The elbow may fall on the knee, but in many cases, it will fall behind the knee. Wherever it falls is where it should be placed. This location may be fine-tuned to remove tension in the body but significant changes in left elbow locations should be avoided.

• **Left Hand Location on Forearm.** Shifting the left-hand location on the forearm raises and lowers the rifle and sights. The objective is to raise the rifle and sights high enough to keep the head erect while aligning the sights with the aiming eye.

• **Sight Height.** Sight height is fixed on sporter class air rifles and can only be raised by raising the rifle. On precision class air and smallbore rifles, riser blocks can be used to raise the sights (*air rifle sight height is limited to 60 mm/2.4” from the center of the bore to the center of the front sight*). This may improve the head position by keeping it more erect. These attachments can also be used to lower the rifle and the position’s COG.

• **Rifle Adjustments.** Modern air and smallbore rifles, including sporter class air rifles, have adjustments for stock length, cheek-piece height and butt-plate height. Adjusting stock length may relieve shoulder tension or improve the athlete’s ability to reach the loading port to reload in position, but stock length changes may also require compensating changes in the left-hand location on the forearm. Weights can be added to precision rifle barrels or buttstocks to change the rifle’s balance. Cheek-piece adjustments can ensure better support for the face, but consideration must also be given to whether additional cheek pressure adds stability or undesirable muscle tension. Vertical butt-plate adjustments should be made to keep the shoulder relaxed. Smallbore butt-plates and cheek-pieces have a multitude of additional adjustment possibilities that challenge even the most advanced athletes to get them right (*be sure any extreme butt-plate adjustments comply with the rules*).

• **Sling Tension.** In principle, sling length should be adjusted so the sling, and not the arm muscles, supports the entire weight of the rifle. If the sling is too long it may not fully support the rifle; if it is too short increased shoulder pressure may add tension to the shoulder muscles and upper body that must be avoided.

Is the Low Kneeling Position a Viable Alternative?

The low kneeling position where the athlete sits on the side of their foot and does not use a kneeling roll has been around for a long time. Some U. S. shooters used it in the 1930s and 1950s, and it has made occasional returns since

then. The author, Gary Anderson, used it successfully in the late 1960s. In recent years a few athletes have used this position with enough success to spark renewed interest in it. 2021 NCAA Smallbore Rifle Champion Mary Tucker, who won a silver medal in the Tokyo Olympics 10m Air Rifle Mixed Team event and placed 13th in the 50m 3x40 Women event, shoots in this position.

The potential advantages of this position are its lower center of gravity and larger support area (*the athlete sits on the entire foot, not just the heel*). Its disadvantages include the discomfort that comes from sitting for prolonged periods in that position and tensions that can be created by extending the left foot further forward.

The most productive version of this position is illustrated in the two photos on the previous page. In these positions, the athlete sits with their body resting on the inside of the right foot (*a shooting mat should be used in this position*). All body weight should rest on the right foot, with the shoulders relaxed down. The left leg must be extended further forward and with the foot in this position it is vitally important for the left shoe to have a firm grip on the mat or floor to prevent it from slipping. Left leg muscles must be completely relaxed. To keep the torso erect, the left elbow must be placed well back of the knee (*the elbow cannot be more than 150 mm/5.9" behind the "point of the knee"*).

If the low kneeling position's potential advantages can be incorporated into a position that mitigates its disadvantages, this position may be capable of even higher average scores than the high position, but at this point not enough athletes and coaches have had successful experiences with it to justify reaching any final conclusions.

Shot Technique in Kneeling

Shooting winning scores in kneeling not only depends upon working out a position that produces excellent, durable holds but it also depends upon being able to reproduce that same position each time you shoot kneeling, as well as the skill to prepare for and execute good shots in that position.

• **Position Preparation.** There are two phases of position preparation, 1) setting up the initial position and 2) the procedure of preparing for each shot. After developing a fundamentally sound position, you need a plan for getting back into that same position in exactly the same way each time you shoot kneeling.

Correct shot technique in kneeling requires a pre-shot routine where the movements to align the rifle with the target are consistent and minimized (*therefore keeping the rifle in the shoulder while reloading is advantageous*). Shouldering the rifle must be followed by brief checks to confirm position balance and muscle



To set up a kneeling position, athletes must have a precise plan for how the parts of the body and rifle are to be placed, and they must be meticulous in following that plan.

relaxation. In outdoor smallbore rifle shooting, it is also necessary to recheck the wind flags and decide if conditions are right to proceed.

• **Shot Technique.** When the pre-shot procedure confirms that it's OK to proceed, the aligned sights must be brought onto the aiming bull—in the same way for each shot. Initial pressure must be applied to the trigger and the sight picture must be centered and settled. Adding steady-smooth pressure to the trigger fires the shot. Applying consistent pressures on the rifle with the hands, shoulder and cheek ensures favorable recoil control during follow-through and calling the shot.

Firing winning scores in the kneeling position presents unique challenges but shooting athletes who put extra effort into evaluating and perfecting their positions will be rewarded with scores that will help them achieve their goals in shooting.

About the Author

Gary Anderson is the Director of Civilian Marksmanship, Emeritus, and is the holder of two Olympic gold medals, seven World Championships and 16 National Championships. Mr. Anderson served as a Technical Delegate for Shooting during the 2012 and 2016 Olympic Games as well as for the 2014 and 2018 World Shooting Championships.

In 2012, the International Olympic Committee awarded Gary Anderson with the Olympic Order, its highest honor "for outstanding services to the Olympic Movement."



CMP and Military Teams Conduct Variety of Educational Courses at National Matches

CAMP PERRY, Ohio – The National Matches at Camp Perry has been a staple in the marksmanship world for over 100 years. The event attracts thousands of guests each year to the historic ranges of the Ohio National Guard Training Facility, with such prestigious competitions as the President's Match, National Trophy Individual and many others that competitors have come to expect over the years.

What some may not realize is that there are also plenty of opportunities for learning while attending the National Matches – on and off the firing lines. The Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP), which conducts the Matches each year, offers an entire lineup of educational courses for those new to the sport and those eager to develop their skills. The types of rifle and pistol courses span from junior to adult, competitive to maintenance and everything in between.

"We held a number of classes for both pistol and rifle to accommodate folks' schedules this year, and they were great," said Steve Cooper, CMP training & education manager.

Along with classes offered solely by the CMP, other courses are partnered with military entities that recruit some of the best shots in the country to lead instruction on the range.

"The Marine Corps junior clinic, guided by Maj. Martinez (USMC Shooting Team Officer In Charge), is always a big hit with our up-and-coming young rifle shooters," Cooper explained. "It was great to see so many enthusiastic young people, who revere the Marine Corps Shooting Team, come out and take advantage of the instruction at this year's clinic."

Likewise, the Small Arms Firing School is directed by many decorated marksmen from a number of military teams. This year, the rifle classroom portion was led by the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit's Sgt. 1st Class Brandon Green, who holds multiple national records including a perfect score in the National Matches President's Rifle event. Out on the line, talented athletes like the All Guard's Staff Sgt. Amanda Elsenboss, who recently earned her own national records at the 2021 National Rifle Matches, and



Juniors in the USMC Clinic receive classroom and live-fire practice at 200, 300 and 600 yards.

Maj. Samuel Freeman, the 2021 winner of the President's Rifle Match – among other decorated service men and women – brought their own knowledge and experience into one-on-one training with participants.

"Having those world-class shooters serve as instructors is an honor and one the students should remember, always," Cooper added.

CMP Courses:

CMP RO Level II Training Course:

The Range Officer (RO) Training Course program, offered at three levels of instruction, was developed by the CMP to provide education for those interested in serving as qualified Range Officers in CMP sponsored and sanctioned competitions. Currently, certification is available in four different shooting disciplines. The Level II Course was presented on the schedule at the 2021 National Matches and guided packed classrooms of individuals who will now be able to take their valuable knowledge back to their home ranges.

"I was so pleased this year to see so many folks come out and take our Level II Range Officer Class," said Cooper. "Many of the attendees already have taken the class, but they come back, not only to pick up more info, but to share what they know with the rest of the group."

“Our veteran RO’s and tower talkers came to multiple classes,” he went on. “They add so much to the coursework because they share ‘real world’ experiences, and you just can’t beat that kind of instruction. I’m proud to be associate with this group of range professionals.”

Team CMP Advanced Highpower Clinic:

Led by members of Team CMP (the organization’s own competitive highpower squad) the Advanced Highpower Clinic offers more complex instruction in service rifle competition techniques using classroom and range discussion. Though the class traditionally only utilizes dry-fire training on the range, in 2021, a 600-yard live-fire portion was added.

With 65 individuals signed up, the course was broken into groups headed by Sara Rozanski, James Fox, Nick Till, Danny Arnold, Robert Taylor and Bob Gill – all experienced and award-winning marksmen. Each focused on a specific area, such as wind reading, mental management and positioning.

“Team CMP put on another excellent Advanced Rifle Clinic again this year,” said Cooper. “Sara Rozanski, the clinic leader, and members of the team shared a great deal of information in the hopes that students come back as stronger across-the-course shooters next year.”

Military-led Courses:

U.S. Marine Corps Junior Highpower Clinic:

The three-day clinic gives focus to more advanced training outside of fundamentals, including weather conditions, how to read wind, equipment use, shooting positions and rulebook standards. Juniors in the clinic spend one day in the classroom, followed by two days of live-fire on the range at 200, 300 and 600 yards.

GySgt Daniel Rhodes, the staff non-commissioned officer in charge of the Marine Corps Rifle Team, helped lead instruction on the firing line in 2021. After a year off from conducting the clinic, Rhodes was pleased with the turnout of around 80 juniors.

“It went fantastic,” he said. “We got a lot of repeat juniors that come out every year. We saw a lot of the same team names that we see every year, a lot of the same faces. They’ve gotten better, but I like to think our coaching and our teaching makes them better as well.”

The Gunny brought his lead instructors along with him to train juniors on the range, including current team members. Many of the instructors even have backgrounds of training recruits at Parris Island or San Diego, making them well-suited to pass their knowledge on to the young junior athletes.

Rhodes explained that around 25 percent of the juniors in the clinic were first-timers, with others more advanced in their abilities. With a variety of experience levels on the line, the instructors do their best to cater to each individual’s needs.

“We talk to them and try to understand them, what they struggle with as individuals and their process,” he said of the USMC’s training technique. “We try to give them tiny, little fixes to what they already have going on.”

Rifle Small Arms Firing School:

Instructors of the Small Arms Firing School include several current members of U.S. military teams, some who have gone on to claim wins in some of the most prestigious National Matches – like SGT Brandon Muske of the Army Marksmanship Unit, who was the winner of the 2021 National Trophy Individual Match, and SPC Luke Rettmer of the Army Marksmanship Unit, who led this year’s Service Rifle 2400 Aggregate event.

Rettmer knows what it’s like to be a young competitor at the National Matches, having several National honors and wins to his name throughout his career. After missing 2020, he was happy to return to Camp Perry in 2021 – this time with new motivations in mind, outside of competition.

“I have a higher responsibility now,” Rettmer said. “My job is to no longer to just compete but to also share my knowledge with others. The Small Arms Firing School was a great opportunity to do that.”

The 2021 Rifle Small Arms Firing School facilitated over 250 individuals on the range.

Learn more about these and other educational opportunities, like the popular M1 Maintenance Clinic offered all year long, on the CMP website at <https://thecmp.org/training-tech/clinics/>.



The Small Arms Firing School includes one-on-one training by current military team members.

COMPETITION NERVE CONTROL FROM THE EXPERTS: *Air Rifle*

When it comes to marksmanship competition, skills can only go so far – having a strong mental game is also a key part of reaching success. In an effort to gain tips on better regulating the psychological aspects of competitive shooting, the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) asked respected athletes to share their personal experiences from the firing line on what they do to control their emotions when nerves creep in and the pressure is high.

LUCAS KOZENIESKY

Lucas Kozeniesky, 26, is a member of Team USA's rifle team. A representative of the United States at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games in rifle, Kozeniesky again earned a spot on the team for the next Olympics in Tokyo, slated for 2021. A six-time All-American athlete, he started his marksmanship career as a junior in 2009 and has since earned local, national and global honors with his performances. He was also a member of the North Carolina State Wolfpack rifle team from 2013 to 2017 – the first ever NC State athlete to garner a place on the U.S. Olympic Team.



A four-time NC State MVP, Kozeniesky led his NCAA team in air rifle and smallbore several times through the course of his collegiate career, racking up record scores, and went on to earn first place overall at the 2016 USA Shooting National Championship in 10-meter air rifle (a title he has earned four times).

In 2019, Kozeniesky was the overall 10-meter air rifle competitor at the Pan American Games in Lima, Peru. He is also a co-founder of Team Winning Solutions, which he created with NC State head coach Emily Holsopple. The organization offers in-person and online coaching, shooting clinics and consultations for junior athletes – an endeavor he is passionate about and has been heavily involved with as he waits for the postponed Olympic Games to commence. Learn more about Team Winning Solutions at <https://twosolutions.org/>.

In November 2020, Kozeniesky set a new USA Shooting National Record at the Hungarian Open, firing a score of 633.6. He also earned a silver medal alongside Mary Tucker in the Mixed Team 10m Air Rifle event at the 2021 Tokyo Olympics.

Pressure is a normal and natural response to competition or stressful situations. People feel pressure when they are doing something that matters to them, whether they're taking a test, walking down the aisle at their wedding, or taking the first shot of a match. For all the shooting folks out there reading this article, you're probably looking for a small edge in your competition plan to get those few points. I've included some things that any person can do, but it requires discipline...which is the hard part.

Before we dive into dealing with pressure, I need you to understand what it is. Pressure is a physiological reaction to stress. Your body is reacting to something in the environment. This reaction includes changes in your heart rate, vision and cognitive reasoning. You physically change. In our sport, we are in a static position and we are competing in a repetitive action. There is not a surge of movement or power, simply picking up a rifle and pointing at the middle of the target; when pressure hits, your ability to do these changes. Let's talk about what could change.

What changes when the pressure is applied:

Match firing...START. BOOM! Your body changes. What changed? Was it the tension between the shoulders? Did the acuity of your vision change? How about the steadiness of your hands? Whatever the change is, there is usually a perception of difficulty with the competition shots versus what you're used to seeing during training. Then what do you do? Well...you think about it. Now you have an internal dialogue going about everything that is wrong AND you need to start the competition, 'Oh boy, I have to shoot a 10 with a shaky hold.' Regardless of if you shoot a good shot, bad shot or just plain mediocre, it's a struggle to do so. What do we do? How can we succeed under these conditions? Well, kids, here is where the hard part comes in, and I send out a call to action: Embrace the shooting athlete lifestyle.

“Dealing with Pressure... It's easier and harder than it looks.

Shooting Athlete Lifestyle:

A lifestyle? What? This means that the day-to-day

actions that you take will impact the way you handle the rifle under stress. Why? Because the body is what filters the physiological reaction to stress. Your general fitness, how you deal with self-talk and control over breathing are all aspects that impact this ability to filter through the stress. These are things that you can train and work on outside the range and not in competition.

A general fitness program is a good choice for your general health but, when under pressure of a match, your body recognizes that stress and can filter it BECAUSE of the exercise and the body being conditioned to being under stress. With that in mind, this needs to occur three to four times a week, MINIMUM. Over the course of a couple months, the body will learn what it's trying to do and will accommodate the increased workload of a competition. For those of you who are multi-sport athletes and have a built-in training routine, you're a step ahead of the program.

Self-talk...is talking to yourself. It is you daydreaming, thinking about a situation critically, and commenting on the body reacting to the environment through the five senses. If you feel something in the position, see something weird in the sights or just straight up have access to the sixth sense and just know something is wrong...then you talk about it. A lot of people let this talk turn into whatever they want. However, this self-talk or dialogue that occurs is a conscious decision and YOU can control your perspective on the situation. When the pressure hits, you can rely on your physical conditioning to remain in control of the body, and then you take control of the mind. Therefore...you are the captain now. Talk yourself through it in a positive way. Rely on the process, give yourself some positive affirmations or just say I HAVE THE POWER. Then you full send that round down range and see what happens.

In other words, be open-minded.

Managing Expectations:

How you perceive the goals you have during the critical experiences is important to your success on the firing line. If your goals are big, scary and right in front of you, that can put an excessive amount of pressure on you and your ability to perform. For example, if I say, 'I'm going to shoot a 630 today,' when you're shooting around a 618, there's an issue here.

First: it demands a huge step outside the realm of your current skill level. Second: it demands this to happen... RIGHT NOW.

This is not healthy because you are putting so much responsibility on a system that can't sustain the demand.

Rather, be mindful of what gets you to that 618. The process, the training, the work you put in, the tactics developed – all of these tasks that you completed to get you to where you are now. These tasks, especially the process, become your focus in a course of fire. Therefore, your goal changes to something centered around the process, which empowers you to take control.

If you focus on that process and executing the shots correctly, you're going to end up in the ballpark of where your average is. Essentially, you did your job right and that is really all you need to do. Run the process the best you can, with an open mind and a full effort and see where you end up.

Dealing with Pressure... It's easier and harder than it looks.

Keep in mind that everything listed above are aspects of training and competing that are completely in your control. The choices you make impact how well you perform. The discipline you exhibit with these choices will help you maintain control and allow you to be the athlete that you are, regardless of the pressure."

GINNY THRASHER

Ginny Thrasher, 24, a Virginia native now living in Colorado Springs, is a former collegiate athlete and an Olympic gold medalist. Thrasher became the youngest female to ever earn the first gold medal for Team USA. During the 2016 Women's 10-meter Air Rifle event at the Rio Summer Olympics, Thrasher was a member of the West Virginia University rifle team from 2015 to 2019 – accomplishing individual and team titles at the NCAA National



Championships (air rifle and smallbore). She is currently an athlete at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado. Learn more about Ginny Thrasher by visiting her website at www.ginnythrasher.com.

"People are afraid of nerves...but from my experience, nerves are a good thing! Young athletes often have a belief that if they could just eradicate nerves, they would be much closer to professional athletes. The truth is, no one competes in the Olympics without being nervous. If you prepare for a big competition for months or years and you are not nervous, that is actually a bad sign! It means the competition isn't meaningful to you. All professional athletes experience nerves, they just have better coping methods and beliefs about nerves than young athletes.

GINNY THRASHER

CONTINUED...

So, why are nerves good?

The main reason is because they activate your sympathetic nervous system, i.e. your fight-or-flight state. When you are trying to perform or feel threatened, your mind triggers your nervous system into this heightened state of awareness and adrenaline. From an evolutionary perspective, this is designed to allow you to protect yourself from danger, such as spearing the lion or running away to safety. This state leads to some interesting physical effects, most of which are very useful when fighting a predator, but not traditionally useful for optimal performance.

In rifle, for instance, that fight-or-flight state increases your heart rate as the body needs more blood moving to your extremities to pick up that imaginary spear. When your heart rate increases, the movement of your gun on the

target gets bigger, which can be negative for scores. This is one of several negative side effects of being in this state.

However, not all the side effects are negative. In fact, some are decidedly positive! When in this state, your vision and reaction times improve significantly, which is beneficial for every single shooting discipline!

Recognizing the specific reactions for your body and whether they are positive or negative for your sport can help to assuage some of the fear and negative beliefs behind nerves. Nerves have a role to play in great performance, and learning to expect and accept them at meaningful events is the easiest way to stop nerves from having control over you. When feeling the pressure in a big match, remember that nerves are a good thing, they are your body's way of saying you're ready to go."

MARY TUCKER

Mary Tucker, 20, is a member of the USA Shooting National Team and the University of Kentucky NCAA rifle team. She began by teaching herself marksmanship, picking up the sport while in high school and training in her family garage using YouTube videos and other online venues. Tucker has competed at several national and international events throughout her career, winning the junior Winter Airgun title and placing second overall in the Open competition in 2018 before going on to claim both categories in 2019. Her freshman year at Kentucky, she earned the Rookie Shooter of the Year. At the 2021



Tokyo Olympics, she earned a silver medal alongside Lucas Kozeniesky in the Mixed Team 10m Air Rifle event.

"Dealing with pressure can be the difference between being a good athlete and a great one, and no one will really have it mastered. The biggest thing that helps me when I am under pressure is confidence. You have to know that you will succeed, and even if you haven't done it before, you have to believe that it's, 'like you to win' (thanks, Lanny Bassham).

You get confidence from practice – practice more than anyone else and try different things to see improvements. Ask questions to good athletes, and try everything. You never know what may work for you. You have to practice so much, and so well, that you can trust. Trust yourself, trust your equipment, trust your process and trust God. Know that whatever happens is going to happen, so be confident and do what you know you can do."

JROTC, CMP Three-Position Postals Are Back!

It's time again to register for the 2021-2022 JROTC and CMP Three-Position Air Rifle Postal Championships – open throughout the fall and winter months! The competition is designed for junior air rifle athletes interested in testing their three-position sporter or precision skills against some of the top juniors in the country, all while firing from the convenience of their home ranges.

The JROTC Postals are open to cadets in Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force JROTC programs, while junior air rifle marksmen involved in 4-H, Scouts, American Legion, club or JROTC air rifle programs are welcome to sign up for the CMP Postal event.

Competition for both the JROTC and CMP Postal begins when registered sporter and precision air rifle participants receive three targets and instructions for recording scores. Individuals then fire in each of the three positions (prone, standing, kneeling) at their home ranges, using one target for each position, before returning the targets to CMP for scoring.

Learn more about each event by visiting the CMP website!

JROTC Three-Position Air Rifle Postal Championship: <https://thecmp.org/youth/jrotc-air-rifle-national-championship/>

CMP Three-Position Air Rifle Postal Championship: <https://thecmp.org/youth/three-position-national-postal-competition/>

High School Teams Top 2021 National Three-Position Air Rifle Sporter Match in June

CAMP PERRY, Ohio; ANNISTON, Ala. – Scholastic rifle teams came to win during the Civilian Marksmanship Program's (CMP) 2021 National Three-Position Air Rifle Sporter Championships, held simultaneously at the Gary Anderson CMP Competition Center in Ohio and the South CMP Competition Center in Alabama, June 24-26.

The three-position event consists of two days of competition between high school and club air rifle marksmen – featuring both the Junior Olympic National Three-Position Air Rifle (3PAR) and the CMP Nationals. As in years past, athletes of the 2021 event fired qualifying scores each day, with the top eight competing in a final. Winners from each location were recognized, with overall winners determined from scores of all participating athletes.

Nation Ford High School from South Carolina, Zion Benton High School of Illinois and Ozark High School in Missouri overtook the overall top three places, respectively, in both the Junior Olympics and the CMP Nationals team contests. Nation Ford has been claiming overall medals consistently at Nationals since 2016 – earning at least second or even first overall, not only as a team, but with its individual athletes.

Staying true to form, Nation Ford produced the overall individual athlete in the Junior Olympic match in 2021, with Maya Cameron, 17, earning a score of 653.9 – just six-tenths of a point over second place. Nation Ford members also reached third and fifth place overall finishes during the match. The team's talented athletes went on to earn the second, third and sixth places in the CMP competition.

Also achieving consistent medal-winning showings over the years is Zion Benton, who has been a past overall winner. The team earned second in both the Junior Olympics and CMP competitions in 2021, with multiple members earning medals at the Camp Perry location.

"I'm really, really proud of them," said coach Master Chief Dan Hackstein. "They've worked hard for this competition. We've been very, very fortunate at our school to have been able to practice since right after the week of the Fourth of July (2020), so we've been working hard – and it's nice to see the practice pay off in these National competitions."

He went on to talk about graduated senior Halie Creekmore, 17, who earned fourth overall in the CMP National event. Creekmore finished second in the



Nation Ford High School

competition her freshman year in 2018 and led at the Camp Perry location in 2021. Likewise, teammate Amarissa Jackson, 17, earned fourth overall in the Junior Olympic event and fifth in the CMP. With Creekmore moving on next year (working toward a future in graphic design), Jackson will have the chance to fill an important role at Zion Benton as she enters her senior year.

"Amarissa really came on strong this year," Hackstein said. "She is just so consistent, and she'll lead our team next year."

Earning the overall individual spot in the CMP National 3PAR event was Jason Champagne, 18, of Jack C. Hays High School, Texas. Champagne also earned second in the Junior Olympic match.

A tournament chess player and honor student, Champagne's coach credits him for bringing "thoughtful contemplation" to the rifle team.

"Jason is the most focused and methodical marksman I have coached in eight years," said Jack C. Hays coach LtCol Don Wimp. "It is unusual to find a shooter who is truly never satisfied and whose goal is perfection every time he shoots."

Champagne will be attending Texas A&M in the fall, pursuing a degree in engineering toward employment in the space exploration industry.

The top eight individuals at each location were awarded medals and checks, presented by the CMP, with the top three individuals overall receiving additional awards. Teams from each location as well as overall were also recognized. As part of the continued support of youth athletes, the CMP will send \$1,000 scholarships to the top three overall graduated seniors of the competition.

For a complete list of results, visit <https://ct.thecmp.org/2021N3PARCresults>.

Hogan, Texas Hill Set New National Records at 2021 National 3PAR Precision Event

CAMP PERRY, Ohio; ANNISTON, Ala. – Mikole Hogan, 17, of Montgomery, Texas, set a new J2 3x20 national record with a staggering score of 599-48X during the 2021 National Three-Position Precision Air Rifle Championships. Hogan dropped only one point during the standing portion to reach 199-15X for a new 20 Shot Standing Age Group 2 national record score, while also garnering perfect scores of 200 in prone and kneeling.

Hogan earned the record during the Junior Olympic (JO) portion of the Championships, which also saw a new Team 3x20 national record score, fired by the Texas Hill Country Shooters. Team members Elizabeth Probst, Braden Peiser, Briley Sralla and Anne White combined their efforts to reach an overall score of 2363-180X to secure the win and a new bar for future competitions.

The 2021 National Three-Position Precision Air Rifle Championships were held simultaneously at the Civilian Marksmanship Program's (CMP) Gary Anderson Competition Center at Camp Perry, Ohio, and the South Competition Center in Anniston, Alabama, July 17-19. The two-day junior event featured the Junior Olympic National 3PAR (three-position air rifle) match along with the CMP National 3PAR match.

Though traditionally conducted at one location, the 2021 Championships split into two to ensure a safer environment for guests and competitors. Athletes participating in the event competed in three-positions (prone, kneeling, standing) for qualification, followed by an Elimination Final for the top eight leading competitors at each location for both the Junior Olympics and the CMP 3PAR events. Athletes in the final fired five shots in kneeling, prone and standing positions before entering one-shot elimination rounds, with the last athlete standing declared the winner.

During the JO match, Emme Walrath, 15, of Kenosha, Wisconsin, and Katie Zaun, 18, of Buffalo, North Dakota, gave spectators in Ohio quite a show during their respective final. On the last elimination shot, Zaun led Walrath by 1.2 points, only needing to maintain her lead to claim the win. After each athlete sent her pellet downrange, the monitors displaying scores for onlookers in the range showed a score of 9.6 for Zaun and an incredible 10.8 for Walrath – tying it up and forcing a shoot off. As the audience members cheered on, Zaun and Walrath loaded and fired one more shot.

Zaun: 10.0. Walrath: 10.3.

With that, the spectators in the stands exploded with applause, congratulating each talented athlete on an exceptional fight for the gold. Walrath, who came from



Mikole Hogan

behind to earn the win, openly showed her surprise and excitement for what she had accomplished through her glowing facial expressions.

"I was shaking in my boots," Walrath said afterward, modestly. "I really have no clue how I did it! Something just empowered me to do it."

"Katie Zaun is just amazing," she added. "When I heard our scores were tied, I was shocked. Going into the next shot, my hand was shaking, but I just tried to take the best shot that I could."

Both Walrath and Zaun showed great sportsmanship and composure on the line after the contest, shaking hands and exchanging smiles.

Walrath returned the following day to overtake the Elimination Final in the CMP 3PAR event as well. Her plan was to go into the qualification round and the finals with a fresh mind, forgetting her hard-fought victory of the day before. She kept her cool and was able to showcase her abilities on the line.

"I was just thinking I had to build up my points in the beginning, which I did, and my positions felt really stable. I was able to get into the zone easily," she said of her CMP follow-up win.

The top eight individuals at each location were awarded medals and checks, presented by the CMP, with the top three individuals overall receiving additional awards. Teams from each location as well as overall were also recognized. As part of the continued support of youth athletes, the CMP will send \$1,000 scholarships to the top three overall graduated seniors of the competition.

For a complete list of results, visit <https://ct.thecmp.org/2021N3PARCresults>.

Rockett Earns CMP's 2021 Top Recipient Title

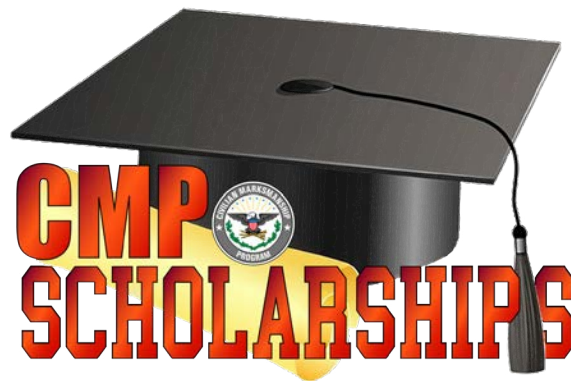


Scott Rockett, 18, of Cary, North Carolina, was recently selected by members of the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) scholarship committee to carry the distinction of Top Recipient of the 2021 Carolyn Hines Memorial Scholarship.

The CMP's Scholarship Program was restructured in 2020 after the passing of longtime Scholarship Committee Board member and passionate supporter of student-athletes, Dr. Carolyn Hines, and took on a new designation as the Carolyn Hines Memorial Scholarship. Over 150 scholarships were awarded in 2021, thanks to the generosity of both the CMP and the Garand Collectors Association – totaling \$187,000.

Though most individuals chosen received \$1,000 each, the elected Top 15 earned \$3,000 for their accomplishments, while Scott, as Top Recipient, received \$5,000.

"Carolyn Hines devoted tremendous effort to set conditions that would allow young people to succeed," said LTG Joe Inge, CMP Board member and current chair of the Scholarship Committee. "She would be so proud of Scott Rockett – proud of his tremendous academic record, proud of his wonderful record of community service and certainly proud of his achievements as a rifle team competitor."



"We, at CMP, send sincere congratulations to Scott and wish him continued success," Inge added.

Scott graduated from Crossroads Flex High School with an overall GPA of 4.39. While in school, he was the student counsel treasurer, student ambassador and captain of the rifle team. He also organized charity projects and raised donations for the homeless.

"Words cannot describe how honored I was to find that I had been chosen as the Top Recipient of the scholarship," Scott said. "To even be compared to an individual as amazing as Carolyn Hines is an honor among itself. I can only hope to be as great of a person as she was, but I will continue to strive for it every day and make an impact in this world – just as she did."

Scott is attending the U.S. Air Force Academy as a member of the rifle team, working toward a career as a pilot. Whether fast planes or slow – he just wants to fly.

"I am very excited and, again, honored, to be a part of the Air Force rifle team, and I am ready to get to work at the Academy and push to be the very best version of myself," he said.

Scott has been an athlete for almost a decade as a member of his high school, local club, 4-H, American Legion and Boy Scouts precision air rifle, smallbore and rifle teams. Given all of his other involvements while in high school, Scott is no stranger to an active schedule. But, according to him, keeping a full plate of interests has actually helped his rifle career along the way.

"I absolutely think that it is important to stay well-rounded in life," Scott said. "This will help you grow as a shooter and as a person. Doing other things that take your mind off of shooting is one of the most important things you can do as a shooter to push yourself to the top."

He went on, "This may seem counterintuitive, but shooting is an astonishingly difficult sport that will drain you mentally and physically. If you lack the well-rounded lifestyle and dedicate yourself entirely to shooting, you begin to let shooting define your emotions and how you

act. That being said, shooting is a sport of ups and downs, and your emotions will follow unless you give yourself other things to do so that you can separate yourself from shooting.”

Scott became involved in marksmanship after a recommendation from his mom’s coworker, who happened to be the assistant coach of the North Carolina State Rifle team. With the suggestion, Scott made the trip to his local gun club to give the sport a try.

“They had me start on a bench, and I had a great first experience, so I came back time and time again until I wanted to shoot so bad that I dropped travel baseball and football to shoot,” he explained.

In 2014, Scott attended his first of many CMP 3P Summer Camps. There, he met Dan Durben, who was one of the directors of the camp at the time, as well as University of Alaska-Fairbanks alum and current Army Marksmanship Unit athlete Tim Sherry, who was a counselor. Scott credits the camps for fine-tuning many of his skills that led him to earn a place as a member of the USA Shooting National Team – where he was reunited with Durben, who is now the National Rifle Coach, and Sherry, who has become a fellow athlete and teammate for Scott.

“It has been an amazing ride, and I am thankful that the CMP has helped me to achieve my dreams,” Scott said of the experience.

Scott earned his Junior Distinguished Air Rifle Badge in 2018 and went on to compete on national and international levels as a member of the World Cup team. In 2019, he claimed the overall spot in the J2 Air Rifle and Smallbore events at the Junior Olympic National Championships and also second overall at the 2019 CMP Smallbore 3P Iron Sight Junior National Championship at Camp Perry. Scott currently competes using his Walther LG400 Alutec for air rifle and his Walther KK300 Anatomic for smallbore.

After a hiatus from regular competition like the rest of the world in 2020, Scott joined other members of the USA Shooting National Team in El Salvador in 2021 for the Junior Airgun Grand Prix, where he earned third overall in men’s rifle and a silver medal in the mixed team competition, alongside teammate Katie Zaun.

“I think that marksmanship has shaped me into who I am today,” he said. “One of the most important things I have learned from marksmanship has been responsibility and self-control. Learning these things has done wonders for me, on the line and off. With these skills, I can study and train smart, allowing me to do both with great success.”

Of all of his accomplishments, he says his most rewarding experience has been gained from going to his local gun club and aiding the next generation in the development of their own marksmanship skills.

“At the end of the year there is a match for the kids,



Scott is attending the Air Force Academy and is a member of the school's rifle team.

and watching one of the kids that I had trained win was the greatest feeling in the world,” Scott said. “I feel like this has been my greatest accomplishment because not only did I give back to the community to help another shooter find his wings, but he proceeded to volunteer at the club, helping the new shooters get a footing in the sport.”

Scott is a true advocate of marksmanship. His long list of accomplishments more than proves his commitment to the sport, while his actions show the powerful strength of his character. And, he’s not done yet. He hopes to one day compete on the U.S. Olympic team, all the while working to take to the skies at the Air Force Academy.

Though not quite in the clouds yet, here on the ground, there’s no question that Scott is already soaring.

“I am ready to push myself and others to be the best versions of themselves, and I will continue to strive for excellence in all that I do and make the most positive impact on the world that I can,” he said.

It’s almost time to apply for the 2022-2023 school year scholarships! See all rules and regulations for the Carolyn Hines Memorial Scholarship by visiting the CMP website at <https://thecmp.org/youth/cmp-scholarship-program/>.

Junior Marksmen Stories...

Texas Junior Austin Stone Learns By Doing at First National Matches Showing

Austin Stone, 16, of Lindale, Texas, and Charisma Owen, 18, of Wichita Falls, Texas, were the overall winners at the 2021 National Matches Junior Team Trophy .22 Pistol Match, fired in July. The two young competitors represented the Texas State Rifle Association and claimed the Riding the High Places Trophy in their win.

The day of the Team match, the wind pick up dramatically. Stone had never shot in wide-open ranges like the ones of Camp Perry and was given an immediate, personal lesson on the range.

"I had to quickly adjust to the constant pushing and pulling of the wind," he explained. "I was a little nervous, but, mainly, I just wanted to perform well with Charisma, who has done well in this event in the past."

Owen, who competes in both service rifle and bullseye pistol, has been a part of the shooting sports world since she joined her local 4-H Club in 2012. Developing a strong interest in marksmanship, she became involved with the Texas Junior Service Rifle and Junior Pistol Team a few years later. She earned her Distinguished Rifleman Badge in 2019, the same year she attended her first National Pistol Matches and is now on her way to achieving the same honor in Service Pistol.

"Shooting with Charisma was so much fun, and there is so much I can learn from her," Stone said. "She is a great captain and is always encouraging the other juniors. She's very experienced with shooting and has been very successful."

"She's also very outgoing and fun to be around and puts everyone on the firing line in a good mood," he added.

Stone has been shooting competitive pistol for a little over two years now, since attending a safety training class with a friend.

"After the training, we went through a bullseye pistol style match," he explained. "Dan Miller, who has been shooting for years, asked me if I wanted to shoot bullseye competitively, and that's when it began."

As a member of the Texas State Rifle Association Pistol team, Stone mainly competes in bullseye but also shoots ISSF (International Shooting Sport Federation) sport and air pistol, along with CMP EIC (Excellence-In-Competition) matches. He uses a .22 caliber Hammerli 208 International, built in the 1970s.

This year was Stone's first trip to the National Matches and, in his words, he "definitely got the Camp Perry



experience with all the rain, and wind and challenges."

"But I enjoyed it. It was a great experience," he said. "I learned a lot about myself and how I shoot and learned a lot from all the other great shooters. It was different and difficult having to shoot multiple times a day for multiple hours each day, but very worth it."

"This sport has great people, and they were all very helpful and supportive of me as a junior," Stone went on. "There was always someone to help me with any question I had, from shooting in the moment to moving forward and developing as a marksman."

Some important advice he received was focusing on each shot individually, forgetting about the bad ones and trusting his shot process. Having encouragement from veteran marksmen was helpful to Stone as he navigated the tough, yet exciting, atmosphere of the National Matches.

"Camp Perry was a great experience, and I really appreciate the spirit of the games and shooters," he said. "This is a great sport, and I learned so much about shooting and mental techniques from all the very helpful and supportive people. The entire time, I felt very supported as a fairly new junior shooter."

For the future, Stone hopes to continue shooting .22 bullseye and sport pistol and working his way to a .22 Distinguished Rimfire Pistol Badge. He's even thinking about becoming part of a collegiate team one day.

Junior Marksmen Stories...

Robinson Claims Records at National Matches

Haley Robinson, 21, of Mill Spring, North Carolina, set not one, not two, not three but four new national records during the 2021 National Rifle Matches. The annual event was conducted by the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) and held in August on the grounds of the historic Camp Perry National Guard Training Facility, where it has been set for over a century.

Robinson's record performances began with the President's Rifle event, where she fired a score of 395-15X to earn new High Junior and High Woman records – finishing seventh overall. She was also the only junior to appear in the 20-person shootoff that accompanies the President's Match.

"The first day, I did pretty decent, and it just stuck," she said of her President's showing.

Back in 2018 (only her second trip to the National Matches) she gave herself an objective to reach the Top 20 shootoff. She inched close in 2019, reaching the President's Hundred (as one of the Top 100 competitors) in 46th place overall and earning a coveted President's Tab. She had hoped to climb her way into the shootoff the following year, but, with the cancellation of the 2020 National Matches, she wasn't given the chance.

"This year (2021), I made it my goal, and I practiced hard before we left," Robinson said. "I was nervous – very nervous – but once I got up there, after the first shot, I was calm."

Along with her marksmanship abilities, Robinson is known for her composure on and off the firing line. She says she doesn't know exactly how she stays so relaxed, but she has a hunch.

"My dad blames it on my low blood pressure," she joked. "I'm just always calm."

Robinson credits her dad, Bobby, for getting her started in marksmanship in 2016 (a year after he began his own journey within the sport). The following year, Robinson and her dad attended countless competitions and practiced whenever they could – talking with one another about nothing but shooting during their long truck rides from match to match. Robinson's hard work paid off when she earned her Distinguished Rifleman Badge, a lifetime goal for most marksmen, that same year.

Now that she's reached the President's Shootoff, she's got a new target in mind – winning the match.

"It's all I have left," she said with a smile.

After her success in the President's Rifle Match, Robinson went on the next day to set a new Women's Rifle Trophy national record score of 496-25X in the National



CMP Board Member Gerald O'Keefe presents Haley with High Junior and High Woman Plaques for the President's Rifle Match.

Trophy Individual Match – finishing 10th overall out of a field of almost 800 competitors that included several decorated civilian and military athletes. With all of her incredible performances combined, she also earned the High Junior record for the P100/NTI/NTT Aggregate.

Seemingly arriving out of nowhere and covering the leaderboards, Robinson claims being a newcomer to the sport with a budding reputation can come with its own challenges.

"It's very different, especially when people don't know who you are," she explained. "And it's different being out here and being female, because they treat you a little different."

She welcomes tips and advice, but to those who may underestimate her talents because of her age or her gender – she lets her scores do the talking.

"I don't say anything to anybody," she said. "I won't even tell people my score, until they ask me. I'm very humble, and I don't want to be THAT person."

Besides that, she's not out on the line, day after day, to prove anything to anyone else – she's doing it all for herself.

"And him," she said, pointing to her dad. "It's me and him."

As for her future plans in marksmanship, Robinson keeps it simple, saying, "Still shoot. Keep going."

And coming back to the National Matches in 2022 to claim that President's Rifle win?

"I mean, I'll try," she said as she laughed.

Walrath Excels on the National Stage in 2021

Emme Walrath, 15, of Kenosha, Wisconsin, has had an exciting year. A regular at the Civilian Marksmanship Program's (CMP) Monthly Air Gun Matches, often shining in precision air rifle, she has progressed from local events to the national stage – maintaining outstanding scores and setting a reputation as a respectable contender in her stride.

Last December, Walrath earned 8th overall at the Gary Anderson Invitational 3x20 junior air rifle competition, held at the CMP's Camp Perry air gun range in Ohio. She returned to the range later that month to reach 19th overall in the USA Shooting Winter Airgun event and even set a new J3 Age Group National Record on Day 1 (621.1).

In March 2021, Emme shot a score of 599-53X at the Indiana Junior Olympics – dropping only one point in the prone position. She also earned third overall in the 60 Shot Open Match at the Camp Perry Open in May as well as second amongst all juniors. Additionally, her Southport Xception junior team (Walrath and teammates Dylan Gregory and Anthony Hotko) claimed the third overall spot in the Open and Junior match.

"I enjoy the feeling of being able to shoot – it's addictive," she said.

Walrath admits that part of what she loves about the sport is the people she's met along the way. Throughout her lifetime, she's been involved in several different activities like piano, swimming, fencing and violin. She's enjoyed them all, but for Walrath, shooting seemed to have the best support system and a community of remarkable people who she has become friends with through her travels. She now sees herself as an ambassador of sorts and is happy to spread the positivity that can come with marksmanship.

"For people who have never heard of the sport before, explaining it to them is fun," she said. "Hopefully I can help grow the sport a bit too."

Walrath offers encouragement to curious juniors looking to join, suggesting, "Definitely try it out. You might find it really fun! It's not like other sports, and it's an experience that I think most people should try."

She began her own career when she was in middle school. Her parents decided that they wanted her to learn gun safety and shooting and soon got Walrath involved with pistol at the local Southport Gun Club in Kenosha.

"But, I didn't really like it all that much," she confessed.

Walrath soon learned the club also had a junior rifle program. She gave it a try, and as it turned out, she liked rifles a lot more than pistols. Jon Speck, the coach at the



club, started training her on three-position smallbore rifle and eventually introduced her to air rifle. Naturally, he has grown to be an important mentor in her marksmanship journey.

"He's always been with me since the very beginning, like my parents," she said of Speck. "No matter what, he's been there for me and helped me so much in this sport. Without him, I don't think I could ever have been where I am today."

Walrath practices several times a week, either in her coach's basement or at the local range. Sometimes she connects with the club's junior team, the Southport Xception, and other times she competes as an individual. She's also a member of Grand Rapids Rifle and Pistol Club in nearby Michigan.

As with Speck, Walrath credits Grand Rapids Coach Cameron Zwart for helping her move on to and excel at national-level competitions.

"He has opened my view of shooting world," she said.

Other advanced matches Walrath experienced in 2021 include the National Junior Olympic Three-Position Air Rifle Championships, fired in Ohio and Alabama in July. During the event, Walrath provided guests at the Camp Perry Gary Anderson CMP Competition Center a thrilling view into the fierce competition of junior marksmanship as she forced a shoot off in the concluding elimination final. With one shot left, Walrath fired the higher score to nab the win. She returned the following day to overtake the CMP Three-Position final as well. When it was all over, Walrath left with a 7th-place overall finish in the Junior Olympic match and 5th overall in the CMP event.

Outside of being awarded for her achievements on the firing line during her National Three-Position showing, she was also formally pinned the Junior Distinguished Air Rifle Badge she had earned a few months earlier in February.

She stuck around Camp Perry in July to attend her first National Smallbore Matches. Competing against some of the most talented marksmen in the country, Walrath managed to reach third overall in the Junior 3x40 Iron Sight Match – once again proving her abilities on a national platform.

“It may get tough at times, but you always have to keep the right mindset and trust the process,” she said.

With apparent success in her process over the last year, Walrath will focus on maintaining her scores, hoping to someday break the 630.0 mark.

“That means getting my hold consistent and a lot tighter,” she said.

Of course, Walrath recognizes that she wouldn’t be able to make any competition, whether in Ohio, Alabama

or anywhere else, without the help of her parents. Her mom, Fawng, and her dad, Shawn, have championed her fully since she began and have helped lead her along her career.

“My parents, have always been on my side,” she said. “They were the first to support my continuation into the rifle marksmanship sport.”

She also admits that they, along with her coaches and friends, keep her driven in her quest for progress.

“The self-satisfaction that comes from improvement is very motivating,” she said.

Now accustomed to national matches, Walrath is looking to one day move even further by competing collegiately for a NCAA rifle team and, eventually, traveling to international matches – including that ultimate stage, the Olympic Games

Beaver Claims First EIC Points at Camp Perry

Junior Andrew Beaver, 19, of Indianapolis, Indiana, earned his first service rifle Excellence-In-Competition points during the Civilian Marksmanship Program’s (CMP) 2021 National Rifle Matches M16 competition, held as part of the annual Small Arms Firing School in August.

Attaining his first four Excellence-In-Competition, or EIC, points in the match means he is on his way to claiming a Distinguished Rifleman Badge – the highest honor given by the CMP to a rifle athlete. An individual receives a badge after competing in CMP EIC events and earning at least 30 points overall.

Marksmanship competition is a family affair for Andrew – competing with multiple relatives back in Indiana and at Camp Perry. He watched his brother, Matthew, become Distinguished as a junior and has been eager to follow in Matthew’s footsteps to nab a Badge of his own ever since.

“It’s always been something I’ve looked forward to,” Andrew said of earning a Distinguished Badge. “I’ve always thought it was something cool to reach for.”

He admitted that his initial goal for the M16 event was to break the current record score of 394-12X, fired a decade ago in 2011. He felt good going into the competition day, but being on the third relay meant he was first to be sent to the pits. The free time pulling targets downrange left him to think about the match ahead and caused his nerves to build.

“Once we got up, I kind of got into the zone and calmed myself down – a lot of breathing,” he went on. “Through it all, I really tried to not get too nervous and just really try to do my best.”

In the end, he was less than 10 points short of the



Christie Sewell, CMP Programs Chief, presented Andrew with the plaque for High Competitor in the M16 EIC Match.

record score yet managed to become the overall winner above the field of more than 300 Distinguished and Non-Distinguished competitors in the M16 Match, with a score of 387-12X. He continued to compete in the weeks that followed, entering many other National Rifle Matches and CMP Games events. There, he earned the High Junior honor in the Modern Military Match after obtaining a combined score of 279-3X.

“I try not to think about what my final score will be,” Andrew confessed. “I make sure I’m eating, make sure I’m drinking water, making sure I’m not thinking about the match too much. I try to think about other things going on.”

Andrew first started shooting when he became involved

with smallbore rifle around age 10 and has been shooting ever since. This year was his seventh competing at Camp Perry, where he signed up for pretty much everything throughout the National Trophy events and the CMP Games series.

He's attended a few Small Arms Firing Schools over his lifetime, led by current members of military teams like the Army Marksmanship Unit (AMU). He revels in their guidance and has even thought of becoming a member after watching them on the range and respecting the excellence they have come to cast in prestigious National Matches like the National Trophy Individual (NTI) and President's Rifle competitions.

"Seeing a lot of the AMU be top performers in a lot of the matches definitely sets a goal of what I would like to do," he said.

A member of the Indiana State Rifle and Pistol Association, Andrew claimed the Indiana Junior State Champion title for highpower in 2020. Someday, he'd like to reach the President's 100 as one of the top 100 competitors in the President's Rifle Match and eventually compete in the accompanying shootoff – an esteemed feat.

And, he's certainly working hard to earn more points in the hunt for that coveted Distinguished Badge.

"I've been shooting a lot and moving my way up," Andrew said. "I come out to have fun. Shooting good scores really makes me feel good about myself – kind of

boosts some self-confidence. And being happy is one of my main goals."

His sister, Meghann Beaver, 22, is also an accomplished competitor – achieving the third-highest female score in the 2021 M16 Match, 24th overall and her own service rifle EIC points. She also earned the High Woman title in the Vintage Military Match during the Games events. No stranger to success, she has claimed several High Junior and High Woman designations throughout her career at local and national levels.

"It's just fun in general because it's not the AR-15s all the time," Meghann said of competing in vintage rifle matches. "It feels like a part of history."

She admits that she doesn't practice the vintage rifles any more than others and chalks up her achievements to, simply, "a stroke of luck."

In the end, one of the most enjoyable parts of competing in marksmanship matches for the Beaver siblings isn't just the chance to improve on the firing line – it is, of course, about outshooting the other.

"I think a lot of what I enjoy is the competition with my sister," Andrew said with a smile.

Meghann shares the sentiment, saying, "I always tell everyone if I think I'm doing poorly, 'Well, as long as I can beat my brother, that's all that matters.'"

These Junior Marksmanship Stories and more are available online! View them all at <https://thecmp.org/news-media/the-first-shot/>

CMP's Matt Carroll Named 4-H Volunteer of the Year

CMP's Matt Carroll, programs logistic manager and education specialist, has been chosen as one of Alabama's 4-H Volunteers of the Year for 2021 for his commitment to 4-H youth in the local community, region and state – "Making the Best Better," as the committee stated.



Carroll was selected as the winner of the East Central Alabama region of Calhoun County, where CMP South is located. For his accomplishment, he will be invited to a 4-H Volunteer of the Year Banquet at the Alabama 4-H Center for recipients, their families and local 4-H agents in November.

"It's nice to be recognized, but I really just have fun teaching the kids safety and marksmanship," Carroll said modestly of his achievement.

Carroll has been a certified volunteer and club leader for the last 12 years. He's also an Alabama 4-H S.A.F.E. Rifle Instructor (a youth development education program that emphasizes peer mentoring and positive interactions between youth and adults). Carroll works mainly in Calhoun County with the Hawkeyes 4-H rifle team. He's a state level 2 trainer in rifle and holds around three classes a year to certify new volunteers in the discipline. He's also involved with the State 4-H Rifle and Pistol Championships and with organizing Alabama's Buckmasters 4-H Shooting Sports Invitational.

For the last 14 years, Carroll has been an employee at CMP South, working with programs within the South Competition Center and the Talladega Marksmanship Park in Alabama. He has been instrumental in coordinating many events for youth and adults like the monthly .22 rimfire sporter rifle and air gun events. Now, as programs logistic manager and education specialist, he helps lead education and training by traveling to regional and national events – providing up-to-date knowledge of current marksmanship rules, regulations and standards.

Former California Grizzly Reaches Tokyo Games

At 27, Spc. Sagen Maddalena of the Army Marksmanship Unit has already compiled a striking collection of awards and recognitions over her rifling career. Her latest accomplishment is arguably one of her most impressive – earning a spot on the United States rifle team that travelled to Tokyo in July, where she earned 5th overall in the Women's 50-meter three-position smallbore rifle event.

Though the experience undoubtedly created incredible memories that she'll carry with her for the rest of her life, it's the unforgettable moments she already collected over the years that granted her the ability to ultimately gain her ticket to Tokyo.

Seemingly from the start, Sagen has harvested enormous marksmanship achievements. As a junior, she earned her Distinguished Rifleman Badge from the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) in 2011 and a place within the prestigious President's 100 during the National Matches at Camp Perry in 2010 and 2011. She was also named the National Matches High Overall Junior by the National Rifle Association that same year and went on to help lead her team to a Junior Rifle Team Whistler Boy Trophy as well as the Freedom's Fire Trophy in 2013 (awarded to the high State/Club team of the National Trophy Junior Team Match).

In college, she became an eight-time All-American at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and a World Championship team member in 2014 and 2018 before enlisting in the Army in March 2019 as a part of the International team as a shooter/instructor. In 2020 alone, Sagen set two National Records in conventional prone and three-position rifle, respectively.

It's clear that Sagen has worked hard over the years to achieve several commendable milestones, but much of her pathway was paved thanks to the help of her involvement with her junior team, the California Grizzlies.

The Grizzlies rifle team has been in existence for over two decades, with members aged 13 to 20 hailing from across the state of California. Many Grizzlies have advanced to the Air Force Academy, Army Marksmanship Unit, U.S. Rifle Team, Navy and other remarkable entities. Now, the team can add "Olympian" to its list of alumni.

Sagen grew up in northern California's Tuolumne County, in Groveland, where she was in the thick of some of the state's most scenic areas.

"My backyard was the Sierra National Forest, so I was outside all the time," she said.

She learned a lot about nature that way. At age 9, her grandpa showed her gun safety and patience. Homeschooled and part of a charter school, Sagen was



Photo courtesy of the U.S. AMU

interested in sports but limited in her options. Eventually, around age 13, she got involved in 4-H where she raised livestock and participated in other activities like her local 4-H .22 program – that's when it all started to click for her.

"I wasn't good at it – I was in no sense good or natural. I just worked really hard," she said of her initial marksmanship skills. "I wanted to beat the boys and try to win the events in my age group. And I grew from there."

It was during her time in 4-H that she noticed a group of juniors who served as Range Safety Officers during competitions. Sagen carefully observed how each took the time to do more than just monitor during the matches – they also taught the athletes on the range.

She would come to learn that the juniors were members of the California Grizzlies rifle team.

"Right away, I looked up to them," she admitted.

During those matches, it wasn't just the Grizzlies who were drawing attention, but Sagen herself. The Grizzlies took notice of her talents and asked her to try out for the team. She jumped at the opportunity and quickly became an integral part of the organization she used to only idolize from afar.

"From there, the hook was set. I was latched on," she said.

The team was led by Robert Taylor, who serves as the Grizzlies coach even today. An accomplished marksman and member of the CMP's Highpower Team, Taylor's influence on the Grizzlies and emphasis on leadership and support made a major impact on Sagen.

"Robert Taylor – I've had so many great mentors, but I always will and always have looked up to him because of the example he set as a coach," she said, proudly.

Her connection with the team also led her to her first

chance to travel to the famous Camp Perry National Matches in Ohio – though not as soon as she had hoped.

In 2009, two weeks before the Grizzlies were set to board the plane for the trip, she got into a horse accident where she dislocated and damaged her shoulder. She said she was fine with the injury and didn't even cry – that is, until the doctor told her she wouldn't be able to go to Camp Perry.

"That's when I started bawling!" she joked.

Eventually, she healed up and made her Camp Perry debut in 2010.

"That was such a great experience because it's eye-opening," she said.

It was her first time seeing hundreds of people instead of only a few at the matches she had competed in previously. It was also her first time laying eyes on the Army Marksmanship Unit (AMU), which came into play later in her marksmanship journey.

After she showed promise as a talented marksman and became captain of the Grizzlies toward the end of her service rifle career, her coaches mentioned that she could expand her abilities by shooting collegiately. Beyond that, they put the idea in her head that commitment in college could lead to a spot on the U.S. Olympic team.

But, she didn't immediately go to college. She worked to buy her first air rifle and borrowed a .22 rifle. Then, she got into contact with the University of Alaska Fairbanks head coach, Dan Jordan, to learn how to become a member of his rifle team.

Sagen realized that the school had the education she was looking for, hoping to go into forestry, and that she would have to give a tremendous effort to achieve her goals – which was exactly what she was looking for.

"I wanted a team that was going to make me work," she said.

Coach Jordan offered her a spot on the team as a red-shirt walk-on, with the opportunity to earn scholarships based on her performance. She quickly accepted, without even visiting campus. She traveled up the coast to Alaska with her mom and quickly settled in her dorm.

It was all business from there.

"As soon as I got access to the range, that's where I lived," she said.

Astoundingly, she had only competed in one air gun match in her lifetime before heading to Alaska. She took what she knew from service rifle and kept an open mind toward learning air rifle and improving her smallbore. She worked on the SCATT training system to stabilize her hold and did everything she could to become comfortable in the new disciplines.

"Nothing really held me back," Sagen said.

Her long-term goals in college were simple: she wanted to be a World Championship team member, set

a National Record and make the Olympic team. She also set seasonal goals, like having the highest aggregate of the NCAA season. They were all drivers in her motivation.

"Now, I want to be the best that I can be," she said of her competitive mentality. "I want to compete at my very best."

As she became more involved in air gun and smallbore shooting, she switched her sights from service rifle to International competition. Coach Jordan encouraged her to sign up for an air rifle selection match at Fort Benning, Georgia, where the AMU is stationed. Although she was looking forward to seeing the service rifle team, she became connected with the International rifle team instead.

Unbeknownst to her, that match was a selection match for the World Championships, which was, of course, one of her college goals. She received third and fulfilled her dream by making the team for air rifle – all in a sport she had been training in for less than a year.

After college, she would go on to achieve her other long-term goals. She also returned to Fort Benning and made it her permanent home as a member of the AMU – exactly where she wanted to be since first seeing the remarkable team at the National Matches so many years ago.

"For me, they set an impression of people who were very professional and very good at what they did," she said.

When it comes to marksmanship, she gives credit to two things that keep her inspired: the progress of hard work and what she describes as "flow" – being fully aware in the moment.

"Shooting allows for me to get into that state," she said. "It's like the perfect dance . . . the way the process flows with the rhythm and shot."

"It's not thinking, it's just doing," she added. "The physical aspect of competing – that is what drives me every day."



Photo courtesy of the California Grizzlies



Throughout its history, the CMP has prepared an ever-growing number of shooters with firearm safety and marksmanship skills through its programs, clinics and other events. With the hope to spread the promotion of marksmanship and shooting sports, other organizations have joined CMP in its efforts by creating their own hometown clubs. Whenever possible, we recognize these clubs and their achievements in our publications. If you would like your club recognized, please email photos, captions and a short article to abrugnone@thecmp.org.

Maryland Junior Coach Diefenderfer Retires After Nearly 50 Years

*Info Submitted by George Kuhne,
Everett Junior Rifle Club*

A long-time legendary coach with the Antietam Junior Rifle Club from Hagerstown, Maryland, is retiring after nearly 50 years coaching junior athletes.

Norris Diefenderfer, 85, came to the sport of rifle indirectly in May of 1973 when the leader of the Washington County, Maryland, 4-H rifle club became ill and was unable to find a replacement. Norris stepped in to fill the role – learning on the job and even going as far as to attend a shooting sports coaching clinic at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado. Over the years, he was also lucky enough to have had various valuable assistant coaches who helped him run the club, gaining experience from one another along the way.

Initially, the 4-H rifle club only met through the summer months, with their season culminating at the annual 4-H rifle match. As time passed, Norris became interested in getting his juniors involved in additional matches. He acquired the ability to use the nearby Chambersburg Rod and Gun Club range in Pennsylvania and held weekly practices, alternating between smallbore and air rifle. Once a month, the young athletes would shoot a college-format match consisting of a course of fire of 60-shot 3P (three position) smallbore along with 60-shot standing air rifle.

During the summer months Norris moved his practices to the North American Rod and Gun Club in Hagerstown, Maryland, for outdoor shooting at 50 yards – maintaining a personal philosophy

that shooting outdoors helped make for better indoor results. Norris brought his first group of juniors to the National Matches at Camp Perry in 1982, which created a tradition that has continued since.

Upon his retirement from employment in 1996, Norris renamed the club the Antietam Junior Rifle Club (<https://www.youthshootingsa.com/product/antietam-junior-rifle-club/>). His junior athletes began traveling to several matches outside of their club like the state Junior Olympic Rifle Competition (JORC), the National Rifle Association (NRA) sectionals, the Palmyra Invitational and some open collegiate matches. Norris held week-long summer camps at the North American Rod and Gun Club, instructing shooters and coaches in the training of young athletes. The Antietam Club also began hosting the Maryland JORC and NRA Sectional matches at the Naval Academy in Annapolis.

This summer at the 2021 National Matches at Camp Perry, after 48 years of coaching, Norris decided to retire. He leaves a legacy of dedication to hundreds of young athletes, including 77 who have gone on to receive Division 1 college shooting scholarships. These scholarships total in the millions of dollars and have made education possible for a number of individuals who may not have attended college without them – a point of which Norris is particularly proud. Several of his athletes have also gone on to All-American honors at the collegiate level.

His teaching methods have been passed down to many other coaches whose children have come through his program. He stresses shooting positions that are fundamentally sound and safe for the juniors, avoiding the all-too-often occurring back and spine issues that can occur from poor training. His sense of humor and warm, encouraging demeanor with his athletes will be greatly missed. Thank you, Norris, for bestowing your incredible knowledge to future generations and allowing excellence to continue within the sport.



Norris delivering instruction to his shooters during practice at the Chambersburg Rod and Gun Club.



Norris (left, seated) delivering tips for shooting at the 2021 National Matches at Camp Perry. Norris has passed on his enthusiasm for the National Matches at Camp Perry that he has been attending since 1982.

Granbury Athlete Earns Fastest Junior Distinguished Badge in School History

Sarah Folsom, 17, of Granbury, Texas, is a quick learner. In only her first year as a marksmanship athlete – and during an impending global pandemic – she produced enough consistent competitive performances to earn a prestigious Junior Distinguished Badge, #1526. On top of that, she earned it in the shortest amount of time in her school's history – just three short months.

A Junior Distinguished Badge is the highest honor awarded by the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) to youth air rifle athletes. A badge is achieved by earning Excellence-In-Competition (EIC) points from firing top scores in qualifying events – 30 needed overall. Athletes also earn bronze, silver and gold Achievement Award Pins in the process.

According to CMP records, Folsom earned her first EIC points in December 2020 and her final points in March 2021.

"To be honest, I didn't know what a Junior Distinguished Badge was until I got my bronze one," she admitted. "After that, I did make it my goal to get the gold one ASAP."

Folsom is a member of the Granbury High School Marine Corps JROTC rifle team – past national-level champions. The team's heritage is saturated in success and filled with several impressive alumni, with Folsom's incredible feat adding a worthy standout mark to the list of the team's achievements.

"I feel grateful," she said of being the athlete who has earned her badge the fastest in Granbury's program history. "Granbury has an amazing team, and I'm glad I am a part of it with fellow amazing athletes and coaches."

Having already received her actual badge, Folsom keeps it on display upon her awards rack at home, just waiting for the moments when she can wear it proudly on her JROTC uniform.

Along with becoming a Junior Distinguished Badge recipient in 2021, Folsom worked with her teammates to allow Granbury the overall win in the JROTC Virtual Championship – adding yet another National Title to their name. Her personal performance on the firing line also led her to the overall individual win over the field of over 200 other athletes in the match.

"It has been amazing to watch her go from picking up a rifle for the first time in September to being a National Champion," said her coach, LtCol Scott Casey. "She clearly is one of the most coachable shooters we have had come through the Granbury program, and her high level of dedication is evident by achieving the DM Badge in record time."



Folsom's interest in marksmanship began her sophomore year of high school when she attended Granbury's annual battalion rifle qualification, held for those students not already on the rifle team. She earned first overall in the competition and was soon asked to join the team.

"I didn't really know what the sport was until I actually started shooting in competitions," she said. "I found that I loved shooting a lot, and I wanted to continue doing it."

She officially began with the precision air rifle team in mid-August 2020 and has since competed in a handful of competitions. Outside of air rifle, she also trains in smallbore on her own.

Despite the pandemic affecting the formative time of her career, Folsom managed to keep a regular practice schedule to sharpen her skills. She met with her team after school on Mondays and Tuesdays for general training, with PET (pre-event training) positioning focus reserved for Wednesdays. Matches were typically fired on Thursdays, while Fridays were set aside for more specific emphasis on areas that needed improvement. Of course, she gives praise to the leadership at Granbury for shaping her abilities during those training sessions.

"My coaches are amazing," she said. "From my first step in shooting to right now, they've helped me with everything."

Read the full story on the CMP's online newsletter, *The First Shot*, at <https://thecmp.org/granbury-athlete-earns-fastest-junior-distinguished-badge-in-school-history/>.

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National Matches Top Juniors 4



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