



ON THE MARK

A NEWSLETTER FOR COACHES AND JUNIOR MARKSMEN* © FALL 2023

AN INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS

Nick Milev Visits USA from Italy and Wins Top National Matches Honors



*Restricted 18+ in CA in compliance with CA State Assembly Bill 2571 prohibiting the marketing of firearms to minors in the State of CA.

ON THE MARK

<https://thecmp.org/news-media/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.

Subscriptions: One free **ON THE MARK** subscription is provided to each junior club that is affiliated with the CMP, JROTC unit with a marksmanship program and 4-H Shooting Sports Club. Individual subscriptions to **ON THE MARK** are available at \$8.00 per year. To subscribe to **ON THE MARK**, contact: 419-635-2141, ext. 724 or email onthemark@TheCMP.org.

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ON THE MARK Wants Your Input: We want your correspondence and opinions. **ON THE MARK** will dedicate space to publish letters from readers. Though we may not be able to publish them all, we will make every effort to provide comments that will be beneficial to the broadest audience. If there is a story you feel we should cover, notify us. Send your comments or questions to: Letters to the Editor, CMP Headquarters, P.O. Box 576, Port Clinton, OH 43452 or email your letters or comments to abrugnone@TheCMP.org.

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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 on-line newsletter, **The First Shot**, at <https://thecmp.org/news-media/the-first-shot/>.

© Sighting Shots ©

IN MEMORIAM: William (Bill) Willoughby

The CMP is saddened to announce the passing of esteemed Board member, William (Bill) Willoughby, on Aug. 5, 2023. He was an original member to the CMP Board in 1996 and served for 19 years until his retirement in September 2015 – marking his place as the longest serving Programs Committee Chair. Read more about Bill's life and his impact on the CMP by scanning here.



Alabama features events at both the Talladega Marksmanship Park in Talladega and the Judith Legerski CMP Competition Center in Anniston. Like Camp Perry, Anniston hosts weekly open public times, Monthly Matches and other competitions during the fall like the annual Dixie Double Match. The 500 acres of Talladega presents rifle, pistol, shotgun and archery opportunities. Learn more:

ALABAMA EVENTS



- © **WESTERN FALL CLASSIC.** If you missed this year's CMP Western Games and Highpower Matches in the spring, here's your second chance to attend! The CMP will be returning to the Ben Avery Shooting Facility Oct. 10-15, 2023, for the Western Fall Classic – a condensed version of the Western CMP Games. Despite the shorter schedule, the event will still offer a wide variety of events for rifle and pistol competitors alike. For more information, including a full schedule and registration info, scan:

WESTERN FALL CLASSIC



- © **AIR RIFLE PROGRAM UPDATES.** The 2023-2024 Three-Position Air Rifle Program Updates have been drafted and released. Such changes include position firing order as well as Postal, Regional and National competitions.

AIR RIFLE UPDATES POSTAL EVENTS



- © **FALL CMP ACTIVITIES IN OHIO AND ALABAMA.** Those searching for unique activities during the fall months should look to the CMP. Dedicated to firearm safety and training for all, the CMP has designed a variety of competitive and learning opportunities available to the public that aren't just for practical purposes – they're also fun!

Ohio events include the Gary Anderson CMP Competition Center indoor air gun range with Olympic Displays, weekly open public times, two laser shot simulators, Monthly Matches and other competitions. Camp Perry also holds CMP's electronic Petrarca outdoor range for rifle and pistol, open for public use. Learn more by scanning the QR code with your phone's camera.

OHIO EVENTS



JROTC, CMP Three-Position Postals

We're gearing up for the 2023-2024 JROTC and CMP Three-Position Air Rifle Postal Competition! The competitions are designed for junior athletes interested in three-position sporter or precision air rifle, fired from the convenience of their home ranges.

The JROTC Postals are open to cadets in Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Space Force 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.

During the matches, participants fire in each of the three positions (prone, standing, kneeling), using one official target for each position at their home ranges. Participants then return their targets to CMP for official scoring. Electronic targets may also be used as long as JROTC Postal electronic target procedures are followed.

Learn more about each event by visiting the CMP website!

On the Cover: At the 2023 National Matches, Nick Milev won the Junior National Trophy Individual Match, Junior President's Match and the Air Pistol – Junior Championship. He also placed 6th in the Air Pistol – Open Championship. Full story on page 24.



MONTHLY AIR GUN MATCHES *in Ohio and Alabama!*

+ OCT 14 + NOV 18 +

FOR ADULT AND JUNIOR ATHLETES!

The CMP's Monthly Air Gun Matches are nearing the end for 2023! Remaining events are set for Oct. 14 and Nov. 18.



+ JUNIOR 3X10 AIR RIFLE + 60 SHOT AIR RIFLE + 60 SHOT AIR PISTOL + 3X20 AIR RIFLE (ADULTS AND JUNIORS) +

Upcoming Events

DIXIE DOUBLE

GARY ANDERSON INVITE

**NOV. 3-5
ALABAMA**

The Dixie Double in Anniston features 60 Shot air rifle and air pistol for adults and juniors, along with a 3x20 smallbore rifle match. The event also includes a fun Target Sprint competition!

**DEC. 1-2
OHIO/ALABAMA**

The Gary Anderson Invitational is a 3x20 air rifle match for sporter and precision junior athletes. Both experienced competitors and those new to the sport are welcome to attend!

For more on these matches and registration info, visit <https://thecmp.org/youth/air-gun-matches!>

TENTATIVE 2024 MONTHLY MATCHES: JAN. 20, MARCH 16, APRIL 20, SEPT. 14, OCT. 12, NOV. 16

THE ALABAMA (ANNISTON) MONTHLY MATCHES ARE HELD WITHIN THE JUDITH LEGERSKI CMP COMPETITION CENTER, WHILE OHIO'S (CAMP PERRY) ARE INSIDE THE GARY ANDERSON CMP COMPETITION CENTER. BOTH ARE EQUIPPED WITH 80 POINTS OF CMP'S OWN INDOOR ELECTRONIC TARGET LINE.



SCAN ME

Larson, Lafayette Gun Club Claim Precision CMP National Three-Position Championships

By Claire O'Neel, CMP Feature Writer and Junior Camp Counselor

The Precision Class National Championships was held on July 10-12 at the Gary Anderson CMP Competition Center in Camp Perry, Ohio. Two matches were held, the CMP and Junior Olympic Three-Position Precision National Championships and saw over 250 athletes competing for the Championship titles.

For the Junior Olympic Championship, the Mavericks from Georgia clutched the first-place spot on the podium after a solid performance firing a team score of 2361-172x. Their team was comprised of Susan Carter, Abigail Swain, Danjela Jordan DeJesus and Madison Kennedy and coached by David Hanson.

In second place was Texas Hill Country with a final score of 2357-150x and rounding out the podium was American Legion Post 295 Ohio with a team score of 2354-163x.

In the individual category for the Junior Olympics, Jack Ogoreuc, of Oil City Jr. Rifle Team (Pennsylvania) earned the champion title. After an exciting final, he edged Mackenzie Larson, of American Legion Post 109 (Colorado), who placed second in the Final firing a 467 to Ogoreuc's 467.7. Larson qualified in first with an impressive 599-55x. Larson holds the National Record for 3P Precision Air Rifle with a 599-57x that she set in April. After a good fight in the final, Griffin Lake of Ontelaunee Junior Rifle (Pennsylvania) ended in third place.

Two spots on the National Future's Team were up for grabs during this match. An aggregate of both the Junior Olympic and CMP National Championships plus the athlete's best final was used to determine National Junior Team spots. These spots went to Larson and Ogoreuc. Earning a spot on the National Future's Team is an incredible honor. Congratulations to both athletes!

In the CMP 3P Precision National Championship, Larson came out on top after another impressive qualifying score of 598-55x and an impressive final score of 470.1. In second was Hailey Singleton, of American Legion Post 295 Ohio, and in third was Ziva Swick, of Palmyra Junior Rifle Team Pennsylvania. The top three athletes were awarded \$1000 from the CMP.

In the team match, Lafayette Gun Club from Virginia placed first with a score of 2358-168x and received a check for \$4000 from the CMP. Team members were Brandon Evans, Matthew Stout, Maria Koenig and Victoria Koenig. The team is coached by Jason Stout. The second place team was awarded to Central Illinois Precision Shooting



Mackenzie Larson celebrates as she claimed first place in the 2023 CMP Air Rifle Precision Championship.

with a score of 2355-170x. They were awarded \$3000 from the CMP. Placing in third place by just one center shot was Texas Hill Country Shooters who had a team score of 2355-169. They were awarded a check for \$2000 by the CMP.

The High Scholastic Team was Sarasota Military Academy from Florida. Team members were Gabrielle Ayers, Mallory Edwards, Emrie Fast-Clarke and Jagrieliz Irizarry. The team coach was Riess Pellegrino.

Every year, the CMP awards additional scholarships to the top three graduating seniors. This year's recipients were Griffin Lake, Brandon Evans, and Katrina Demerle. These scholarships can be used towards college tuition or a vocational school.

Twenty-one athletes were awarded their Junior Distinguished Badges, with thirteen shooters earning them during the Precision Championships. Earning a distinguished badge is an incredible honor, one that takes years of hard work and dedication to the sport.

Sporter Champions Named at CMP National Three-Position Championships

By Claire O'Neel, CMP Feature Writer and Junior Camp Counselor

The Sporter Class National Championship was held on June 22-24 at the Gary Anderson CMP Competition Center in Camp Perry, Ohio. Two matches were run, the CMP and Junior Olympic Three-Position National Championships and saw over 150 competitors and 50 teams compete.

Nation Ford High School from Fort Mill, South Carolina, won the National CMP Sporter Team Title with a score of 2194-69. They were awarded \$4000 from the CMP, and this marks the sixth consecutive National Title for Nation Ford.

In second place was Zion Benton Township High School (Illinois) after posting a score of 2169-65. They were awarded a \$3000 cash award from the CMP. Rounding out the podium was North Brunswick JROTC from Leland, North Carolina. With a score of 2168-74, they edged Fontana MCJROTC by nine center shots. North Brunswick was awarded \$2000 from the CMP.

The High Club Team was Gallatin Valley Sharp Shooters from Montana. Team members were Natalie Samson, Nicole Berger, Marlie Sampson and Naya Talarico. Team Coach was Lee Nelson.

In the individual category, Zion Benton saw Kalinn White win the championship title. Along with her championship medallion, White was awarded a Crossman Challenger donated by the Crosman Corporation. Emma Allen, representing Appling County 4-H placed second, and Hope Dobek representing Des Moines Central High School placed third. The top three finishers were each awarded \$1000 from the CMP.

The rest of the top eight individuals were awarded medals as well as a \$500 cash award from the CMP.

Nation Ford also placed first in the Junior Olympic 3PAR Championship with a score of 2187-78. Zion Benton Township High School placed second, and Daniel Boone High School placed third.

The High Club Team was Trigger Time 4-H from Virginia. Team members were Samantha Seagle, Samantha Erick, Noah Richter and Lexi Strand.



Kalinn White of Zion Benton Township High School smiles after she finished first in the Final.

After scoring a 430.7 in the final, Abril DeCastro, a rising senior at Nation Ford, secured the Junior Olympic 3PAR National Championship. She was also awarded a Crosman Challenger donated by the Crosman Corporation. Kiara Hallett, an individual from Iowa placed second, and Samantha Zermeno, also from Nation Ford placed third.

Thirteen junior shooters were awarded their Junior Distinguished Badges. Earning a Distinguished Badge is an incredible honor, one that takes dedication to the sport and is sought by junior shooters all around the country.

The CMP awarded an additional \$1000 scholarship to each of the top three graduating seniors. This year those scholarships were awarded to Hope Dobek, Kees Vandergriff, and Ashley Padilla Cabello. These scholarships can be used towards college tuition or a vocational school.

Along with all the medalists, the CMP would also like to congratulate Nation Ford's Coach Col Sean Mulcahy on his retirement. After many years of dedicated service, he leaves behind a decorated JROTC program, and we wish him the best in his well-deserved retirement.

CMP THREE-POSITION MATCH RESULTS



LESSONS, VALUES AND EXPERIENCES

THE LESSONS, VALUES AND EXPERIENCES JUNIOR SHOOTING PROGRAMS SHOULD PROVIDE

By Gary Anderson, DCM Emeritus



Junior Shooting programs must be athlete centered. The highest values in every junior program should focus on the young athletes who participate. The eight athletes in this photo are being introduced as finalists in a 2022 National Three-Position Air Rifle Championship.

Successful junior shooting programs must have committed adult leadership, an effective organizational structure as a shooting team or club, and a range facility where program participants can learn and practice. After those prerequisites are established, the program leaders and coaches must develop and implement answers to these two important questions:

- **“What are the lessons and values that our junior shooting program teaches?”**
- **What are the experiences our program gives its athletes?”**

This **On the Mark** article seeks to provide answers to those questions that junior shooting leaders can use to guide the preparation of their team or club programs. This guidance embraces eight different topical areas.

¹ An excellent resource for new junior programs to use in developing their gun safety training is the **CMP's Junior Shooter's Guide to Air Rifle Safety**. This publication may be downloaded and viewed at <https://thecmp.org/youth/air/>.

² **Coaching Young Rifle Shooters**, 2nd Edition, by Gary Anderson, was published by the CMP. Copies can be purchased from the CMP at <https://thecmp.org/publications/>.

1. Gun Safety Training

Every junior shooting program participant must receive instruction in safe gun handling and established range procedures. There is general agreement among shooting sports leaders that if youth shooting participants learn nothing more than how to handle guns safely, their participation will have been worthwhile. The goal of safety training is to achieve a perfect safety record with zero injury-causing safety incidents involving program participants. Safety training must cover:¹

Safe Gun Handling Rules. The first lessons in a shooting sports program must be learning how to safely handle, clear, load, and unload the guns that are used in the program.

Safe Shooting Range Procedures. All participants must learn how to act on ranges in order to protect the safety of everyone present on that range. Target shooting events are conducted according to strict range procedures that all participants must learn and follow.

Personal Responsibility. The gun safety training every youth receives should give them the knowledge of how to be safe with guns and a lifelong sense of personal responsibility for handling guns safely.

2. Basic Marksmanship Training (Rifle or Pistol)

Every new participant should be offered a basic marksmanship course that teaches skills needed to complete a standard course of fire. New shooter instruction should teach the fundamental sport skills required to fire a competition course of fire. This instruction can be given for small classes or even one junior at a time. In air rifle or smallbore rifle programs, those who receive instruction should be able to complete a 3x10 or 3x20 three-position event. In pistol that means being able to fire a 30-shot National Match Course or a 30- or 40-shot air pistol event. Youths in BB gun programs learn to shoot 4x10 four-position events.

Basic Rifle Marksmanship Instruction. Basic marksmanship courses typically last ten to twenty sessions. Coaches should have lesson plans for each session that identify what will be taught and the shooting exercises used to practice those instructions. As an example, my book *Coaching Young Rifle Shooters*² provides a 20-session “Basic Rifle Marksmanship Course Syllabus” which starts with gun and range safety instruction, then, in succession,



Basic marksmanship course instruction should be carefully structured; live fire sessions require close supervision to ensure safety and mastery of essential techniques.

teaches: 1) shot technique, 2) the supported firing position, 3) zeroing and scoring, 4) the standing position, 5) use of the sling and the prone position, 6) the kneeling position and 7) three-position shooting.

Basic Course Guidelines. Initial instruction should have beginners do their first firing in supported firing positions on targets with big scoring rings.³ Targets should be big enough that all well-aimed shots, even from new shooters, hit scoring rings. This ensures that their first live firing at targets will give positive feedback. Three additional guidelines are: 1) introduce new shooters to dry firing as a preferred method of achieving more repetitions, 2) start actual range firing early-- ideally in the second or third instructional session, and 3) teach standing as the first regular firing position—if big targets are used. New shooters can learn the prone and kneeling positions after achieving a basic mastery of standing. Sitting position instruction is taught only if the juniors are shooting Rimfire Sporter, Highpower Rifle, or BB Gun events.

Basic Pistol Marksmanship Instruction. Pistol instruction for juniors follows a similar progression. New pistol participants' first shooting is usually done by shooting off of a rest while sitting. Initial shooting in the standing stance may be done with two hands or with one hand supported by a rest or sling. Young pistol athletes must begin strength training for the arm and shoulder as

³ BMC Targets, which can be purchased from the CMP, are designed for this purpose.

⁴ The CMP Guide to Junior Pistol Shooting, 2nd edition, is published by the CMP and is available in a printed version or it can be downloaded from the CMP website at <https://thecmp.org/publications/>. See pages 7-8 for a description of the Progressive Position Pistol Program.

LESSONS, VALUES AND EXPERIENCES

soon as possible. This is necessary so they can advance to shooting in the classic one-handed pistol stance. This instructional sequence for new pistol athletes is described in the **CMP Guide to Junior Pistol Shooting**⁴.

Coaching and Instructional Resources. There are also several national youth-serving organizations that offer marksmanship instructor or coach training for adult leaders and that provide instructional resources and lesson plans for basic marksmanship courses:

- **JROTC Marksmanship Instructor Course.** <https://thecmp.org/jmic/>. This program was designed and managed by the CMP for the nation's JROTC commands. All JROTC instructors who teach rifle marksmanship must be certified through this program, which is now offered online.

- **4-H Shooting Sports.** <https://4-hshootingsports.org/>. Volunteer 4-H marksmanship instructors must be trained by state certified instructors in state or regional workshops.

- **NRA Coach Education Program.** <https://coach.nra.org/>. The NRA Shooting Sports Coach Development program offers training in multiple shooting sports disciplines.

- **Daisy's Shooting Education Ten Lesson Curriculum.** <https://www.daisy.com/nationals/>. This program is widely used by youth BB Gun programs.

3. Competition Opportunities

Every junior should have an opportunity to experience target shooting competition. The key word here is "opportunity." That does not mean every junior should be required to participate in competitions, it means every junior should have that opportunity. Some youths and their parents may be satisfied with learning gun safety and "how to shoot." However, almost all youths who join junior shooting programs, if given a choice, will decide that they want to try competition.

Introduction to Competition. Experiencing competitions should start with shooting competition courses of fire in practice. Many programs conduct record matches during regular practice sessions where rules, with Range Officer commands and time limits, are enforced. A team record match objective should be to teach competition rules. Many programs now use Orion Scoring Systems software to conduct virtual matches with other teams where each team fires on their home range and uses Orion software to rank their scores.⁵ The CMP Aces Postals (<https://thecmp.org/youth/aces-postal/>) can be used as a competition introduction. **SCOPOS** sponsors Monthly Virtual Matches (<https://www.scopos.tech/monthly-virtual-matches>) and major national virtual leagues in the fall for advanced teams and in the spring for new shooters and pistol teams (<https://www.national-leagues.com/>).

How much traveling a team does for off-site matches depends upon their location. If there are other teams or match sponsors nearby, shoulder-to-shoulder matches or leagues involving minimal travel should be arranged. Teams in more remote locations may only be able to travel to three or four off-site matches each year.

Performance-Based Evaluation. Healthy youth programs prepare their juniors for competitions by

THE COMPETITION PYRAMID

- Team Record (Practice) Matches
- Postal Matches
- Virtual Matches (with Internet connections)
- Regional Shoulder-to-Shoulder Matches/Leagues
- State and Regional Championships
- National Championship Qualifying
- National Championships
- International Championships for USA Shooting National Team

This "Competition Pyramid" identifies the progressive competition experiences available to junior shooting athletes, in the order they are typically encountered.

⁵ **SCOPOS** (<https://www.scopos.tech/>) provides **Orion** Scoring and Match Management Systems as well as **Athena** electronic targets and **Results** (Result Center) products. Disclosure: The owner and developer of **SCOPOS** products is the author's son, Dr. Erik Anderson.

first establishing their performance capability in practice sessions and then encouraging them to strive to shoot their practice averages in competitions. If an athlete shoots their average in a competition, they had a good match performance, regardless of where that score placed. Healthy youth programs avoid evaluating competition results based on whether someone won or attained certain placings. If an athlete or team wants to place higher in competition, they do this by working to improve their performance capability in practice and then striving to shoot those new, higher scores in competition. In performance-based systems, tracking training and competition results, as well as athletes' personal bests (PRs) is essential.⁶

Opportunities to Travel and Have New Experiences. One of a program's competition goals should be to give program participants annual opportunities to travel to off-site matches where they see new parts of the country and meet new friends. Many advanced programs try to send teams to national championship competitions like the National Matches that have open participation, or to National Championships sponsored by the CMP, USA Shooting and American Legion. The latter championships require teams and individuals to qualify in preliminary competitions.

Organizing Competitions. Some advanced junior programs foster athlete development by sponsoring their own competitions. This requires establishing a cadre of adult volunteers within the club or team structure who know how to do match administrative functions such as registering competitors, operating safe ranges, scoring targets, and producing results lists.

4. The Shooting Range

Junior shooters should have a safe, healthy, sports-friendly shooting range available for learning and practicing. Junior programs need a shooting range where they can conduct their instructional and team practice sessions. Team or club ranges may be 10m air gun ranges, indoor 50-foot rifle or pistol ranges or, less



Competition experiences for Juniors can vary from club record matches on four- or five-point local team ranges to National Championship participation. This is the individual final in the 2023 National Three-Position Air Rifle Precision Championship where athletes competed on a range fully equipped with electronic targets in front of an enthusiastic audience of several hundred spectators.

commonly, outdoor 50-foot or even 50-meter ranges. Start by making sure the range is safe and clean. Ideal ranges have five components: 1) firing points with a target system and safe backstop, 2) an assembly area where athletes can prepare for firing (*having nearby secure storage for club equipment is desirable*), 3) a classroom or meeting area, 4) an administrative and results center (*office*) and 5) bathrooms. Ranges must have backstops that safely capture fired projectiles, present targets according to applicable rules, and provide indoor lighting that meets rulebook standards. Trained Range Officers must be available to ensure that all range operations are conducted safely and according to the rules.

Range Enhancements. Ranges with modern enhancements can make Shooting more attractive to youth, parents, and spectators. Range walls tell a lot about the program being conducted there. Do the colors, art, posters, and signage portray an Olympic sport and its heroes? The widespread use of Orion Scoring and Match Management Systems among junior shooting programs has sped up scoring, reduced volunteer requirements and facilitated results displays. Electronic targets can make

⁶ Programs that use **Orion** scoring can now use **SCOPOS' Results Score History** feature to track all of their athletes' practice and competition scores.

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Junior programs with motivated athletes should expose them to advanced coaching and shooting camps or clinics.

Shooting a modern spectator sport, both at the range and via the Internet. The recent availability of lower cost electronic targets means many junior clubs and teams now have target systems that give them the possibility of leaderboards and dynamic displays of competition results.

Personal Health and Safety. Range operations must provide for the mitigation of health risks that come from lead exposure (*indoor rimfire pistol and rifle shooting*), and lead dust (*air gun shooting*). Indoor smallbore ranges need effective air handling systems; air gun ranges must have a plan for lead removal and cleaning. Depending upon the type of shooting being done, participants may be required to wear eye and hearing protection during range firing.

5. Team Equipment

Youth shooting programs need to have loaner rifles or pistols and basic equipment available for use by new participants. A key to providing loaner equipment

for new participants is making sure it is size-appropriate. A 12-year-old struggling with a full-sized M40X or M52 target rifle will not learn good marksmanship skills. Junior shooting programs typically go through a years-long process of acquiring appropriate loaner rifles and equipment needed to support their instructional programs.

Recommended Starter Equipment. If a junior rifle program is just getting started, it is recommended that they focus on sporter class three-position air rifle. Competition grade sporter class rifles must by rule be available to youth programs at a maximum of \$650 each. Necessary equipment for sporter class shooting is pretty much limited to slings, kneeling rolls, pellet stands and shooting mats. Expensive rifle clothing and after-market rifle accessories are not permitted. Programs that shoot on paper targets will need spotting scopes and stands at some point or they may decide to invest in electronic targets. Smallbore position programs need to obtain junior grade smallbore target rifles like the Savage Mark I-FVT, which can be

⁷ Check the CMP Sales website at <https://thecmp.org/22commercial/>.

⁸ *CMP Guide to Junior Pistol Shooting*, pp. 13-14.

purchased through the CMP for less than \$400 each.⁷ Smallbore rifle and precision air rifle programs also need to have a selection of shooting jackets and trousers if they want their new juniors to be competitive in today's matches. Junior pistol programs need to decide whether to start their juniors with air pistols or .22 rimfire pistols. The **CMP Guide to Junior Pistol Shooting**⁸ provides guidance regarding starter pistol choices.

Equipment Adjustments, Care and Cleaning. Precision air and smallbore rifle shooting, in particular, involves a lot of technical equipment. Coaches need to understand the intricacies of adjusting this equipment so that they can assist juniors in adjusting their equipment. Periodic barrel cleaning is critical for maintaining rifle accuracy. Team training plans should include occasional gun cleaning and equipment maintenance sessions.

Acquiring Personal Equipment. As junior athletes become more active, programs should encourage them to obtain their own equipment. Acquiring personal equipment is important for advancing athletes because it will be better than the team's training grade equipment, it will facilitate making more precise equipment adjustments and it makes dry fire and air gun training at home possible. Coaches need to be able to advise athletes and their parents regarding what equipment to acquire. One of the best ways to learn about available equipment choices is to go to major competitions to see what the top athletes use. Commercial shooting sports suppliers frequently display product selections at these matches.

6. Advanced Training and Skill Development

Youth shooting programs should foster athlete development by providing opportunities to train and learn advanced marksmanship skills. Completing a basic marksmanship course should only be the beginning of several years of marksmanship participation that is distinguished by progressive improvement. Junior programs can foster athlete progress by offering:

Opportunities to Train. The first step in skill development is practice. To facilitate practice, team ranges



In Shooting there is joy in learning new skills, making great shots, shooting good scores and being supportive teammates.

must be available for training sessions more than once a week. Programs that encourage their youths to strive for excellence may have their ranges available for training five or six times a week.

Advanced Instruction and Coaching. Basic marksmanship courses only cover the essential skills needed to fire a competition course of fire. When an athlete starts to train to improve competition results, they will need higher level coaching. Programs with knowledgeable, experienced coaches who can offer advanced training to their athletes are fortunate. For programs that don't have advanced coaches, there are alternatives:

• **Shooting Camps.** For rifle athletes, one of the best ways to gain advanced instruction is to attend a CMP Junior Rifle Camp or Clinic (<https://thecmp.org/youth/camps/>). Every summer the CMP offers a full schedule of multi-day camps in various locations around the country. Camp instruction was developed by USA National Team coaches. CMP camps are staffed by top intercollegiate rifle athletes.

• **USA Shooting Certified Training Centers.** USAS' Certified Training Centers program recognizes about 15 centers of excellence that are qualified to offer advanced training to athletes in ISSF-type events. <https://usashooting.org/get-involved/clubs-shooting-centers/>

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Marksmanship Training Resources. Today there is a tremendous selection of excellent training resources that junior program leaders can use to fill their knowledge gaps and guide their athletes' efforts to improve. Available resources include:

- **USAMU Training Guides.** U. S. Army Marksmanship Unit Guides that present the technical knowledge of the U.S. Army's elite shooters are published by the CMP and may be purchased through the CMP E-Store (<https://thecmp.org/publications/>).

- **CMP Coaching Resources.** The CMP "**Coaching Resources**" website lists a variety of relevant instructional resources. <https://thecmp.org/coaching-resources/>

- **On the Mark Articles by Gary Anderson.** Reprints of more than 60 technical articles written by the author and published in **On the Mark** can be downloaded for use in coach development and for distribution to athletes and parents. Check the list at https://thecmp.org/gary_otm/.

- **USA Shooting Resource Center.** The Center offers a comprehensive list of books and resources linked to

high performance sport and shooting training. <https://usashooting.org/resource-center/#category-shooting-instruction>

Fitness and Healthy Lifestyles. A component of achieving excellence in any sport is encouraging athletes to be physically fit and live healthy lifestyles. Coaches may find that learning how to teach physical fitness and promote healthy lifestyles (*eating, sleeping, mental training*) can be beneficial for their junior athletes.

7. Program Values

Youth, program leaders and parents should have a shared set of values that give positive guidance and purpose to their program. A program's shared values determine its priorities and how it will achieve them. Recommended junior program values include:

Athletes First! The program is dedicated to teaching marksmanship as a sport to young athletes while protecting their safety, giving them quality instruction, and fostering their personal development.

GOALS FOR JUNIOR SHOOTING SPORTS PROGRAMS

1. Every junior shooting program participant must receive instruction in safe gun handling and established range procedures.
2. Every new participant should be offered a basic marksmanship course that teaches skills needed to complete a standard course of fire.
3. Every junior participant should have an opportunity to experience target shooting competition.
4. Junior shooters should have a safe, healthy, sports-friendly shooting range available for learning and practicing.
5. Youth shooting programs need to have loaner rifles or pistols and basic equipment available for use by new participants.
6. Youth shooting programs should foster athlete development by providing opportunities to train and learn advanced marksmanship skills.
7. Youth, program leaders and parents should have a shared set of values that give positive guidance and purpose to their program.
8. Junior shooting clubs and teams need to secure the future of their programs and the sport of shooting by developing new leaders and encouraging lifetime involvement in the shooting sports.

Participant Responsibility. Athletes, coaches, and parents are committed to learning how to be safe with guns, master the skills and traditions of the sport of Shooting and achieve results solely through personal effort.

Joy. Youth and program leaders should enjoy their Shooting sports experiences. There is joy in learning new skills, making great shots, shooting good scores, and being supportive teammates.

Motivation to Train and Excel. Athletes in this program are encouraged to strive for excellence—to try to be the best they can be.

Ethics and Fair Play. Athletes, coaches, and leaders are committed to the principles of sportsmanship and fair play and to following competition rules. Any form of cheating, using drugs or other means to gain unfair advantages over other competitors is rejected.

The Olympic Connection and Shooting History. Shooting's status as an Olympic Sport gives youth participants opportunities to live the Olympic dream. Three-thousand years of target shooting history adds special meaning to marksmanship endeavors.

8. Leadership Development/The Future of Shooting

Junior shooting clubs and teams need to secure the future of their programs and the sport of shooting by developing new leaders and encouraging lifetime involvement in the shooting sports. Too many junior programs are dependent upon one or two active leaders. When those leaders finally step down, the program fails because it had no succession plan. There are several actions programs can pursue to prepare for an enduring future:

Participant Promotion. The first step in building a strong future is keeping a steady flow of new participants coming through the program. Junior programs need to keep their communities informed about the training and growth experiences they offer so that as older juniors age out and move away new participants take their places.

Parent Education and Volunteer Training. Junior programs should have an ongoing parent education program that informs and involves them regarding team activities. Some parents and interested members of the community should be invited to learn how to supervise safe firing activities, administer team records, or become assistant coaches. They will become the coaches and leaders of the future.

Fund-Raising. Keeping junior programs active requires fund raising to buy equipment and pay the costs of travel, lodging, meals, and entry fees for competitions.

Some programs find local or regional sponsors. Many youth shooting programs link their fund-raising efforts to the Midway Foundation (<https://www.midwayusafoundation.org/>) which provides advice, matching funds, and cash grants.

Shooting as a Lifetime Sport. One of the great challenges in American youth shooting is keeping participants active in target shooting after they age out of junior programs. BB Gun competitors are too old to continue at age 16. School-age three-position air rifle athletes age out at age 18 or 19. Athletes on college teams finish at age 21 or 22. A small percentage of those athletes will continue their training and competition careers at USA Shooting's Olympic Training Center or in the U. S. Army Marksmanship Unit. Despite this shrinking pyramid of shooting sports opportunities, there are successful options for retaining junior participants. Encourage them to become future junior coaches. Introduce them to lifetime shooting disciplines like Highpower Rifle, Vintage Military Rifle, Rimfire Sporter or Bullseye Pistol where they can continue to compete. It is vitally important to encourage junior athletes to stay involved in Shooting because they will become the future leaders of the shooting sports.

About the Author

Gary Anderson, Director of Civilian Marksmanship Emeritus, retired as the full-time CMP Director at the end of 2009. He continues to work with the CMP as the senior marksmanship instructor. During his remarkable career, he won two Olympic gold medals, seven World Championships and 16 National Championships. He served as a Vice President of the International Shooting Sports Federation (ISSF) from 1990 through 2018. He is a former Nebraska State Senator and Past President of USA Shooting. He 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."

In 2014, the CMP expanded its world-class air gun center at Camp Perry and renamed the facility the Gary Anderson CMP Competition Center, in honor of Anderson's contributions to the organization and the marksmanship community.



Alaska Team Feature: Borealis Bullseyes

By Jennifer Green, CMP Feature Writer



Borealis Bullseyes Precision Air Rifle team poses for a photo at the Gary Anderson CMP Competition Center.

I caught up with the Borealis Bullseyes from Anchorage, Alaska, to talk with rising high school junior Henry Riffe, and rising high school seniors, Sophie Wilts, Bella Anderson, Cora Anderson (yes, twins) to discuss their journey as a team and future plans. Coach Marshal Reed started this club team back in 2000. In 2001, his team won gold at the National Championships in Atlanta, Georgia, and he's been chasing another victory ever since.

Training in Alaska can be tough at times. Shooting practice in the winter requires them to drag their bags through 3 feet of snow, when it's -20°F. The training was worth it though; the Borealis Bullseyes placed 2nd at the Western Regionals in Sandy, Utah, which qualified them for the CMP National 3P Precision Air Rifle Championships here at Camp Perry. This impressive performance has made Utah a favorite match for them.

The team placed 36th overall this week at Camp Perry with an aggregate score of 2,268-100x. They did well and seemed to have fun while doing it too. The team liked Ohio so far and although they didn't make it out to Cedar Point, Sophie said the team has a great view of the nuclear power plant from their hotel window! They did, however, enjoy a team trip out to Kelleys Island, and tried a local favorite, Toft's Ice Cream.

A fun ritual the team participates in is dying their hair with blue hairspray. Unfortunately, on the day we spoke they had washed it out because it had gotten all over their suits the day before. As for music, the aux cord in the car

goes to Bella, who only plays Taylor Swift on the way home from matches. The girls don't mind, but Henry is not too keen on the choice, protesting, "It's terrible, I hate it. It's 20 songs in a row and I'm just looking out the window trying to tune it out." He's outnumbered but his teammates insist that Swift is growing on him and has even been spotted bopping his head along to some songs.

The future is bright for these young athletes. The three seniors are looking ahead and planning for college, although no decisions have been made yet. The Anderson sisters have plans to tour a few colleges, some of which have rifle programs. Henry has a bit more time to think about that than the others as he is starting his junior year of high school. Sophie was excited to be staying behind to shoot in the 3-Position Smallbore National Match, the following day where she placed 72 with an aggregate score of 1,080-20x. It is clear that whatever they decide to do next, if they give it the same dedication and energy as they give the sport of shooting, there's no doubt that they can and will succeed.

Interested in joining a Marksmanship Team?

Visit the CMP website to find a CMP Affiliated Club near you or reach out to your CMP State Director.

**STATE
DIRECTORS**



**CLUB
SEARCH**



Junior Distinguished Badge Program

The National Three-Position Air Rifle Council established the Junior Excellence-In-Competition Award Program to provide incentives for junior three-position air rifle competitors to improve and excel.

This program awards prestigious badges of distinction to the most outstanding junior shooters. Junior shooters earn EIC credit points by placing in designated competitions in accordance with the requirements of this program.

The Junior Distinguished Badge is awarded to school-age junior three-position air rifle shooters who attain a series of high rankings in designated major junior air rifle championships that include the State Junior Olympic Qualifiers, CMP Cup Matches, National Junior Olympic Championships and other National Council Three-Position Air Rifle Championships.

Congratulations to the juniors listed here who recently earned their badges. **ON THE MARK** will recognize all juniors who achieve this outstanding goal in each issue.

For more program info, log onto the CMP website or email CMP Competitions at 3PAR@TheCMP.org.



DISTINGUISHED
BADGES



Badge #	Name	Hometown	Badge #	Name	Hometown
#1671	Jasmine Lopez	Leland, NC	#1687	Kameron Wells	Granbury, TX
#1672	Liv Lusk	Dahlonega, GA	#1688	Marissa Fedora	Yuba City, CA
#1673	Asa Wells	Ozark, MO	#1689	Dylan Tonel	Folsom, CA
#1674	Diana Leppert	Burke, VA	#1690	Jacob Mirabal	Santa Fe, NM
#1675	Julia Winstrom	Kimball, NE	#1691	Susan Carter	Baxley, GA
#1676	Chloe Shannon	Broken Arrow, OK	#1692	Katlyn Sullivan	Statesboro, GA
#1677	Elizabeth Lilly	Marble Falls, TX	#1693	Logan Major	Stafford, VA
#1678	Rhett Wingard	Pawnee, AL	#1694	Ziva Swick	Palmyra, PA
#1679	Courtney Allison	Fountain, CO	#1695	Rylie Stoeser	Ft. Pierre, SD
#1680	Lachlan Harris	Fort Mill, SC	#1696	Mya Dissing	Hartford, SD
#1681	Brianna Benedetto	Beach Park, IL	#1697	Zachary Higgins	Gray, TN
#1682	Alivia Griffiths	Lebanon, OR	#1698	Evelyn Golden	Fairbanks, AK
#1682	Lizzea Wright	Des Moines, IA	#1699	Natalie Welter	Parker, PA
#1683	Rhett Daniel	Ozark, MO	#1700	Cody Jenkins	Lewisburg, WV
#1684	Kaitlyn Hawk	North Pole, AK	#1701	Jake Kapper	East Sparta, OH
#1686	Gabrielle Ayers	Sarasota, FL	#1702	Brynn Gray	Wimberley, TX



Ossi Leads as CMP's National Smallbore Sees Jump in Participation



Cecilia Ossi claimed the 3P Air Rifle/Smallbore Aggregate and the 3P competition.

CAMP PERRY, Ohio—With a newly configured National Matches calendar, the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) may have found a formula for success.

The refreshed lineup for 2023 was designed to allow individuals to compete in the Smallbore matches on Camp Perry's outdoor Petrarca Range as well as in Air Gun events within the Gary Anderson CMP Competition Center located just next door – all during the same day. The change caused participation to double in some events while also rising significantly in others.

"I was blown away by the turnout for this year's championship," said Brad Donoho, CMP smallbore manager. "We created a very ambitious schedule and somehow pulled it off."

A total of 245 individuals attended the CMP's Smallbore series this year, taking part in the mix of Prone and Three-Position aggregate and team opportunities offered to adult

and junior athletes. Age awards were also presented to those under 18 and beyond, with 25 athletes over the age of 60 competing in the matches and some even over the age of 70.

The enhanced schedule is part of the persistent effort from those within CMP's Air Gun and Smallbore departments to make competitions as accessible as possible while also introducing new lifelong options for athletes of a variety of ages within the expanding world of marksmanship.

"This couldn't have been done without our spectacular staff who made it all happen," Donoho added.

Another exciting addition to the CMP Smallbore phase in 2023 was the inclusion of electronic targets for the first time at Camp Perry. Unlike past years, participants were able to view their scores on monitors placed at each firing point – with scores instantly added through an automatic software system.

"The introduction of the new 50 meter smallbore targets was a huge success," Donoho said. "There were some problems along the way, but we will learn from them and be ready to make next year even better."

With Smallbore and Air Gun events running simultaneously, the CMP created a Three-Position Smallbore and Air Rifle Aggregate Championship for those who competed in both disciplines. Earning the inaugural win in the match was Cecilia Ossi, 21, of Annandale, NJ, with a score of 2421-60X.

Back in Three-Position Smallbore, Ossi earned the top spot after firing the lead score in the qualification round and reaching the high score in the final. Following in second was SPC Jared Eddy, 22, of Midland, GA, with Griffin Lake, 18, of Emmaus, PA, landing in third.

Lake went on to earn second in the Junior final after being bested by Carley Seabrooke, 16, of Helena, AL. Zachary Jackson, 20, of Madison, WV, took third.

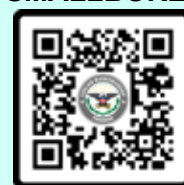
Adding more competitive fun, the Three-Position lineup included a 4-Member team event. Earning the

win by a commanding 25-point lead was the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit team of SGT Jared Desrosiers, SPC Jared Eddy, SGT Patrick Sunderman and SSG Brandon Muske. Griffin Lake, Jack Ogoreuc, Natalie Welter and Brady Fowkes joined forces to win the Junior team match with an impression gap of their own – 28 points over the second place team.

A 3-Member Elimination Match was also held during the week, with Cecelia Ossi, SSG Brandon Muske and SrA Peter Fiori forming team "P B and C" to claim the overall win over USAMU teammates Desrosiers, Sunderman and Eddy. Finding third for the bronze medal was "The Decent Three" team of Dylan Gregory, Bremen Butler and Brandon Evans.

View a complete list of results of the 2023 National Smallbore Matches on the CMP's Competition Tracker page.

NATIONAL AIR & SMALLBORE



In 2023, CMP's National Smallbore Events doubled participation in some events while also growing others.

Club Feature: Ohio's Pickaway Diabolos

For being a small patch of Ohio, Pickaway County has a lot to offer. Part of the Columbus metropolitan area, its home to a world-famous pumpkin show, beautiful state parks and, for young firearm enthusiasts, its own marksmanship club.

The Pickaway Diabolos is a youth-orientated organization located in the Everts Center in Circleville, Ohio – Pickaway's county seat. The Diabolos club was started in 2013, simply, to give local youth the opportunity to compete in the shooting sports.

"There was the local 4-H and Boy Scouts that had basic introduction and safety shooting programs, which is good, but I felt that more opportunity to compete was needed," said Pat Cherry, club leader and instructor.

He personally invested in several rifles and equipment to get the program started and since then has relied on supportive donations from the National Rifle Association Foundation and MidwayUSA Foundation grants.

"American Legion Post 134, VFW post 7941 and Hilltop Sportsmen's club have been generous to us, as have the Pickaway County Sportsmen's Inc., which gives us range time and equipment use," he added.

The Diabolos host one 10-meter airgun range with seven firing points that's rented by the hour. This past summer, the club teamed up with Pickaway County Sportsmen's Inc. and moved some of its more experienced competitors into outdoor conventional prone and three-position .22 smallbore shooting. The club has also considered starting an outdoor summer smallbore 60 shot and Dewar Course league.

Two female Diabolos have already done particularly well in the smallbore discipline, including 13-year-old Avery Hines who placed in the Central Ohio Rifle League Regional and Ohio State Championship. Additionally, 16-year-old Anna McComb won the Ohio Junior Trophy in the Ohio State Championship. Both the Regional and State Championship were fired on Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) electronic targets – technology the Diabolos hope to one day own once funding is secured.

Though the Pickaway Diabolos club is geared toward youth, it's open to debilitated marksmen as well, including



The Pickaway Diabolos is a youth-oriented rifle club out of Circleville, Ohio.

disabled veterans, with the potential to involve interested adults – but only if Pat approves.

"Adults are too much trouble," he joked. "Also, there are other adult clubs in the county."

The Diabolos currently hold 20 juniors, with 14 traveling to various events at the Germania Singing & Sport Society in Columbus and CMP matches at Camp Perry.

Over the years, many of its members have not only come from far reaches of Pickaway County but from across Central Ohio, with some traveling from as far as Bexley (33 mi), Delaware (63 mi), Galina (52 mi), Pickerington (25 mi), Springfield (73 mi) and Xenia (63 mi).

Several Diabolo alumni have gone on to bigger stages, including one who joined The Ohio State University rifle team and is now an engineer in the Pickaway County Engineers Office and another who fired for the Akron Zips rifle team and is an ER Nurse. Other careers from past members include an Army Doctor, an accomplished musician as well as an individual studying agriculture engineering on a high-tech farm.

"Most all our members graduate as National Honor Society members," Pat said. "We believe in the journey

being as important as the destination. The self-control and self-discipline required in shooting carries to other endeavors. Many of our members have multiple interests."

Avery Hines has a small herd of cattle and a desire to be a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, specializing in large animals, and likes to hunt – with several deer and turkey to her credit. There was even a Diabolo who designed an electric-powered pellet rifle for a high school science fair, which earned him a full-ride scholarship in engineering.

"I find that all of our young members are unique, and those that stick with it seem to do very well," Pat said. "One of recent members that stands out is Mr. Tyler Goodwin. Aside from being a good shot while in high school, Tyler attended fire department training, as his father was a Battalion Fire Chief in Pickerington (Ohio). Of his mother's family, her father and brothers were all fireman, and she operates the local fire museum."

"Tyler was also an outstanding student and was given a congregational scholarship to the military academy of choice," Pat went on. "Wishing to be a helicopter pilot, he chose to take an Army ROTC scholarship at Embry Riddle Aeronautical University in which he graduated from and has been commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant and assigned to Army Helicopter School."

With an already remarkable legacy, the Pickaway Diabolos are currently accepting new members, so long as the individuals, "show the maturity to follow direction," Pat said.

Keep up with the Pickaway Diabolos through their Facebook page

Have an article to share or want to highlight your CMP Affiliated Club? Send us your photos, reports and articles to highlight in The First Shot – email abrugnone@thecmp.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

A Note from the CMP: At the CMP, we are not only dedicated to an increasing number of those involved in marksmanship within our own programs but are also devoted to supporting the efforts of those who are creating their own



Anna McComb brought home the Ohio State Championship win.

legacies in their own ways. Our Club News articles are our way of displaying the successes of our clubs, in the hopes of encouraging others to take the same respectable paths – both in marksmanship and in life. We are proud of our clubs for all their endeavors and are honored to show them off within our news feed.



The Diabolos currently have around 20 juniors but are always looking for more members.

Max Soviak National CMP Rimfire Sporter Match

By Sheri Trusty, CMP Feature Writer



During the rimfire match, the Soviaks shared information about the Corpsman Maxton W. Soviak Memorial Foundation, which provides adventures, experiences and resources to veterans and their families so they can “Live Life to the MAX”.

When Max Soviak’s family entered Camp Perry for the Max Soviak National CMP Rimfire Sporter Match on July 8, they were flooded with memories of long ago matches they competed in as a family. Max was a skilled and enthusiast marksman, and he and his family spent countless hours shooting inside the Gary Anderson Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) Competition Center and outside on the Camp Perry ranges.

On Aug. 26, 2021, Max, a Navy Corpsman, was killed by a suicide bomber while assisting evacuees in Kabul, Afghanistan. This year, the CMP paid homage to Max’s service, sacrifice and memory by naming the annual CMP Rimfire Sporter Match in his honor.

About 240 marksmen competed in the match. Among them were his father, Kip Soviak, two siblings and a brother-in-law. It was an emotional day for the family.

“It was a lot today,” Kip said. “This place has always meant a lot to us. It felt like coming home.”

The family hasn’t competed at the National Matches since 2014, when the kids were young and life was simpler.

“This was our family time, not just being here, but practicing before the matches and then coming here to

compete,” said Max’s mother, Rachel. “We’d pack lunches and sit around the tent together. Our kids have a lot of memories of this place, and it stirred the memories up for them.”

Amongst the sounds of shots flying down range and the laughter of families competing together, Max’s memory became a little more tangible.

“The kids said they felt good coming back, and they want to keep coming back,” Kip said.

During the rimfire match, the Soviaks shared information about the Corpsman Maxton W. Soviak Memorial Foundation, which provides adventures, experiences and resources to veterans and their families so they can “Live Life to the MAX”. Kip and Rachel established the foundation to honor Max after his death.

While some organizations focus on meeting a specific need, the Corpsman Maxton W. Soviak Memorial Foundation wants to meet veterans where they are. The foundation funded a veteran’s NASCAR trip and helped a family with a Disney vacation. It provided service dogs and emotional support dogs to many veterans to help them live happier, more independent lives.

The foundation recently rescued a Belgian Malinois dog from a kill shelter, named it Pilot after Max's dream to become a pilot, and placed it with a veteran.

"Pilot was a rescue dog. They asked us if we wanted him because 'he's 20 minutes from meeting his maker.' I took him, even though I didn't have a veteran for him yet. We were able to match him with a veteran who was very excited to get him," Rachel said. "So sometimes we help veterans, and sometimes we rescue dogs."

Although there have been many requests for dogs lately, the foundation offers much more.

"Maybe a veteran needs appliances or extra help with groceries or a ramp for their home. We want people to think outside the box. It doesn't have to be something big, grand or great," Rachel said.

The Max Soviak National CMP Rimfire Sporter Match was a reflection of Max's fun and adventurous personality. He loved to shoot, and he loved to be with his friends and family. Across Viale Range, marksmen were enjoying life and making memories the way Max once did on that very ground.

The Rimfire Sporter Match is a lighthearted, kid-friendly match that is more about camaraderie than competition.

"You can grab a .22 out of your closet to shoot," said CMP Competition Manager and HR Specialist, Shannon Hand. "It's at a National Level, but it's fun and very family-oriented. Lots of kids shoot this one."

Among the competitors was Sam Payne of Kingston, Georgia, who has been shooting the Rimfire Sporter Match at Camp Perry since he was 13. He shot the match with his father, Doug Payne, and his brother, Zach Payne. Sam said Rimfire is one of his favorite matches. Fun fact about Sam, he's the only competitor to shoot a perfect 600x600 score as a junior in 2015.

"I just really enjoy it. I've shot the Olympian smallbore stuff, and it's not as fun," Sam said. "This is more recreational. It's just for fun."

Doug is a former 4-H shooting sports coach, and he said rimfire is a good steppingstone into marksmanship for kids.

"It's a low-cost, entry-level sport, and a lot of 4-H state events use rimfire for their competitions," Doug said. "CMP lets anybody who can handle a gun safely shoot rimfire, so kids can compete."

The Payne family has traveled to Camp Perry for the National Matches for so many



Sitting (or kneeling) is one of the position during the match, along with standing and prone.

years because they enjoy competing at the camp.

"We come because of the atmosphere and the camaraderie," Sam said. "It's the most people you'll see on the line at the same time. It's pretty cool to see 100 people all lined up together."

Find more about Rimfire Sporter on the CMP website.

RIMFIRE SPORTER



Many juniors compete in the Rimfire Sporter Match.

Smallbore Prone Matches Make History Utilizing Electronic Targets

By Sheri Trusty, CMP Feature Writer



The National Smallbore series utilized electronic targets for the first time in National Matches history.

The first time Mark Del Cotto of Lexington, Kentucky, stepped onto the grounds of Camp Perry, he was just a kid tagging along while his father competed in the National Matches. From 1971 to 1983, Del Cotto joined the ranks of competitors at Camp Perry, but then he graduated college and life got in the way. In 2008, Del Cotto decided it was time to return to his early passion for competing at the National Matches, and on July 8, he came in third in the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) Smallbore Prone Iron Sight Championship.

"I was an early shooter, and I love it," he said.

DelCottoisatwo-timeNRASmallboreProneChampion. When he first returned to the sport, he competed in CMP ServiceRifleMatchesandNRAHighpowerChampionships, but he found he couldn't devote space in his busy life to everything. He chose to focus on Smallbore.

"I didn't have time to do Highpower and Smallbore, so I picked Smallbore Prone," he said. "Smallbore is a better experience for me. You get to shoot more shots in a day."

The CMP Smallbore Prone Iron Sight Championship

is part of a four-day competition that includes two days of Iron Sight Championship Matches and two days of Any Sight Matches.

"Each day, competitors shoot 160 record shots, all fired from prone position," said CMP Smallbore Program Manager Brad Donoho. "They do a 40-shot match at 50 meters, a 60-shot match at 50 yards, and a 60-shot match at 100 yards."

The competitors are vying for the top score of 6,400 possible points. Due to a USCG search, the last day of the Smallbore Prone Matches was cut short and the match was condensed to a 5,200 points aggregate.

"This is a big prone match," Donoho said. "It's like a marathon, and they're trying to make as few mistakes as possible."

Camp Perry is a favored competition site for marksmen due to the challenges created by the camp's proximity to Lake Erie. Lake weather can be varied and unpredictable, all in the same day.

"We had classic Camp Perry conditions today," Donoho

said on day one of the Smallbore Prone Iron Sight Championship. "It started out a little overcast, nice and warm, and then a thunderstorm rolled in. We had pretty blustery conditions and a downpour. Here at Camp Perry, we're accustomed to 60s and chilly and 90-degree days."

Del Cotto said marksmen were disappointed when the NRA moved the National Smallbore Rifle Championship to Bristol, Indiana, so many of them asked CMP to create its own smallbore competition.

"It was like moving the Masters from Augusta," Del Cotto said. "Ninety-percent of competitors wanted to come back to Camp Perry. When they moved it, the level of participation went down and down."

This year, CMP competitors had the added benefit of scoring with Kongsberg Target System (KTS) technology which relies on acoustics to determine shot location. Scoring is instantly displayed on user-friendly, touch screen monitors at the shooter's side.

"This is a really nice setup for electronic targets," Del Cotto said. "It's much easier to shoot the match. It's quicker, it saves money on paper targets, and there are no rain delays. This is an absolute treat to get to shoot like this."

Kevin Nevius of Gibsonburg, Ohio, brought 30 years of shooting experience and six national titles to CMP's Smallbore Prone Matches. He said Smallbore Prone competition has its own unique appeal.

"The course of fire is longer. You shoot more shots per day," Nevius said. "There's an element of endurance."

Nevius is accustomed to the challenge of shooting at Camp Perry, but he said day one of the Any Sight Prone Championship was difficult.

"We just came off the line, and that last match at 100 yards was tough," he said. "It's really hot, and it's really breezy. It was a hard day today, but that's Camp Perry."

Nevius placed second in the Smallbore Iron Sight Prone Championship and the Overall Prone Aggregate, and he had fun doing it.

"What I like about the National Matches is that I get to see all my friends. When you shoot for this many years, you meet a lot of people, and you miss them," Nevius said. "The competition here is fantastic."

Claudia Muzik is no stranger to Camp Perry. The Air Rifle Junior Olympian has been practicing and competing



Petrarca, a covered range, allowed competitors to stay dry throughout the rain.

at the camp for years. She won the Smallbore Prone High Junior Iron Sight Championship and U18 Championship. She had to push through challenges that are particular to Camp Perry to seal the win.

"The wind was definitely a challenge during the match, especially at 100 yards, but that's what Camp Perry's known for," Muzik said. "There were multiple cease-fires from eagles on the range and boats coming into the impact zone. You have to get off the line and then get back in and readjust the focus."

As one of the younger competitors at the National Matches, Muzik enjoys the opportunity to shoot with a wide range of marksmen.

"The National Matches are definitely my favorite match of the year because of all the different types of people you see. I'm usually shooting with people my age," she said. "I'm going to shoot until I can't physically shoot, so it's cool to see older shooters here doing what I want to do one day, and I learn from them. They share all their tips."

View full National Smallbore results on Competition Tracker.

**NATIONAL
SMALLBORE**



CMP's Top Pistol Junior: Nick Milev

By Sheri Trusty, CMP Feature Writer



Nick waves to the crowd as he is introduced in the Junior Air Pistol Final. Nick finished in first place with a 232.2.

This year's High Pistol Junior, Nick Milev, traveled to the 2023 National Matches all the way from his home in Ossona, Italy, but he didn't come to compete. He came to visit his uncle, Olympic sport shooter Emil Milev, and experience American life. Arriving in Ohio during the National Matches was just happenstance, but, nevertheless, Nick blew through the matches with top honors.

"This is my first time in America and my first time competing in America," Nick said. "This competition was just a coincidence that I decided to seize with the goal to try something new."

Nick tried it, and he conquered it. He won the Junior National Trophy Individual Match, the Junior President's Match and the Air Pistol – Junior Championship Final. He placed 6th in the Air Pistol – Open Championship Final.

Although this was Nick's first American competition experience, the 18-year-old has been shooting since he was handed an air pistol at age 10. He started competing in 2018. Those years of marksmanship helped eased the intimidation of walking into Camp Perry for the first time.

"I came here, and Emil told me I should shoot the match. We went to the range, and I shot one day to learn

the technique," he said.

Despite his success, Nick's goal coming into the National Matches was not winning but simply experiencing competition at Camp Perry.

"I like the atmosphere at Camp Perry. Everyone is so excited about shooting," he said.

The National Matches are very different than competitions in Italy, where Nick said marksmen keep their focus on performance.

"At Camp Perry, everyone was excited about the match – about how they're going to shoot and what technique to use. They ask each other how they're doing and are so helpful," Nick said. "I did like Camp Perry so much because in Italy there is not something like bullseye matches. So I came here in America, and my uncle taught me the rules and the technique. A few days later were the matches."

Nick was inspired to become involved in shooting sports after watching Emil compete in world championships across Europe.

"Since I was a kid, my family and I used to travel to where he had matches in Europe with the goal to meet him and also see the matches, too," Nick said.

The positive atmosphere at the European matches drew Nick to the sport.

"I was watching him, and I was watching the people watching him," Nick said. "He was happy, and the people were excited. He was smiling and proud of his shooting. I decided this is what I want to do. I saw my uncle as an example to follow, so I grew up with the desire to be a shooter. Also, my father was a shooter about 35 years ago, so I think he just gave me the passion of shooting."

Nick's marksmanship skills were greatly impacted by the training he received from Emil, particularly the mental training that is so vital in shooting sports.

"Emil helped me improve the mental part of shooting. In Italy, we train only in the physical, but he trained me in the mental, and it worked," Nick said.

Mental training transformed Nick's shooting.

"You have to be focused on what you are doing in shooting. You have to think only about what you are going to do next," Nick said. "Don't think about your life. You have to be able to mentally isolate yourself. You have to get into that mindset."

Nick's trip to America has widened his worldview.

"My life in Italy is so simple. Most of my time I go to school, and I train shooting every day at home and two times a week in the shooting range. Most of the nights, I hang out with my friends," he said.

Here in America, Nick has enjoyed experiencing a different culture and was astonished by some of the things American teenagers take for granted, like free drink refills at restaurants.

"I like America so much because everything is bigger in America than in Europe. It's so cool and so different from Europe," he said. "One thing that surprised me is that you can refill your drink. That's so cool. I like the hamburgers, chicken wings, donuts – basically everything I've tried."

Another big difference Nick discovered is that American teenagers graduate a year earlier than they do in Italy. Even though he is 18, Nick has one more year of high school to complete before he heads to a university.

"Universities here have so many clubs and so many sports. The universities at home don't have that," he said.

After graduation, Nick plans to earn a degree in computer science.

"I'll continue to shoot. Hopefully, I'll still have time to shoot when I'm at the university," he said. "And I hope to come back to Camp Perry next year."

Find more on the CMP Pistol Program by visiting the CMP website. and download the CMP Guide Junior Pistol Shooting.

**PISTOL
PROGRAM**



**JR PISTOL
GUIDE**



Left: Nick's uncle, Emil, taught him about mental training and that has helped Nick during his matches.



Right: Nick, right, on the firing line at Camp Perry. This was his first time in America and competed in the National Matches.

Thomas McGowan Claims Junior, Civilian Awards

By Sheri Trusty, CMP Feature Writer



Thomas is awarded the Alice Bull Trophy Plaque by Gary Anderson, DCM Emeritus.

Thomas McGowan has a passion for shooting, but he's just as happy being behind the scenes pushing others to win. That doesn't mean he loosens the slack on his competitive drive in a match. His performance at this year's National Matches proves he's out for the win, whether his own or another marksman's.

Eighteen-year-old McGowan, who traveled from his home in Hortonville, Wisconsin, to Camp Perry, was High Junior in the President's and National Trophy Individual Match. He became the second Junior to win the Alice Bull Trophy and was only eight Xs short of tying the national record of 793-38X set by Justin Utley in 2018. McGowan is a member of the Wisconsin Junior Rifle Team, whose top team won the Minuteman Trophy during the six-man National Trophy Team Match.

"It was the second year we won that. We were the top Junior team," he said.

McGowan and his sister, 15-year-old Kacie, won the National Trophy Junior Team Match.

"It was my third time winning this, but it was the first time Kacie and I shot together," McGowan said.

McGowan was top Junior in the 2400 Aggregate, and he coached and competed in the four-man team match, where his team earned top honors. He was High Junior, 2nd

Civilian and 6th overall in the National Trophy Individual Match. He earned a spot in the shoot off in the President's Match.

"I've made several shoot offs at the NRA long range matches, but this was my first time in the President's shoot off," he said. "The top 20 shooters shoot an additional 10 rounds at 600 yards, fired in 50 second increments."

The shoot off was challenging, especially under Camp Perry's windy conditions.

"The shoot off makes you focus on making quick decisions. I was nervous because this was my first time," McGowan said. "Shooting in the wind was a great factor."

The wind creates one of McGowan's favorite challenges as he coaches younger marksmen.

"What I like about coaching is, I like the game of wind reading. It's like playing a game of chess," he said. "I get a high from shooting, but I get the same high sitting next to a shooter and reading the wind to help them win. When I hear my shooter say it's the first time they cleaned a 600-yard string, that's the best feeling in the world."

The Wisconsin Junior Rifle Team pulled out multiple wins at this year's National Matches, and McGowan attributes their strong showing to an exceptionally skilled team.

"One thing that's different this year is the consistency of shooters on our team. It wasn't three and three maybes or four and a couple maybes. Everyone was strong, and that's rare in a junior team," McGowan said. "Our coaches had a lot to do with that. Everyone was able to do well and have that drive. That's been different in the last couple years."

McGowan was thrilled to help his team win the Minuteman Trophy (High Junior Team) in the National Trophy Team Match. It was the reason he came to the National Matches.

"I'm here for my team. I didn't plan to come, but I wanted to help them win. Everything I did before today was just rehearsal for the match we won today. I'm here being the best I can be for my team," he said.

The National Matches were also practice for McGowan's entrance onto the world stage. He recently earned a spot on the U.S. National Rifle Team, where he will shoot on its Young Eagle Rifle Team. Team trials took place in Lodi, Wisconsin.

"In the trial, you had to shoot 120 shots at 1000 yards using a Palma rifle. They judged you on elevation, basically. They focused on how tight you can shoot," McGowan said.

He will travel with the team to the Long Range World Championships in South Africa in March, 2024.

"It will be an adventure. I'll be over there a month," he said.

McGowan gained his success shooting a service rifle equipped with a March scope and a Brux barrel.

"Pretty much everything else was purchased at White Oak Armament," McGowan said. "I want to thank Brux Barrel for sponsoring me and White Oak Armament for all their support. They've both done a lot for the team."

McGowan also expressed gratitude to Ken Fuhrmann, who guided McGowan into marksmanship.

"He was always a big help to me and my dad in my adventure into highpower," McGowan said. "And I want to thank my parents, Spencer and Joan, especially in the funding department, but just for being there to get me what I need and give me a mental boost when I need it."

McGowan plans to shoot and coach shooting for years, but this fall, he will enter Lawrence University in Wisconsin and pursue a musical career.

"I'm going to study trombone performance with a jazz emphasis in their conservancy program," he said. "I guess that's not a very common thing, to be a shooter and a trombone player. They are very polar opposite strengths."

They are different, he said, but also much the same.

"I think they utilize a lot of the same skills – practice, performance, consistency. They seem to share similar mental concepts, like performing under pressure," McGowan said.

McGowan has often been asked how he remains calm during trombone performances. His answer is simple: he's a marksman.

"When you shoot in front of people, you have to be able to overcome that mental block and allow yourself to be the best version of yourself," he said. "I find that works in both places."



Brother/sister team Thomas and Kacie McGowan won the National Trophy Junior Team Match. Although Thomas had won the match twice in previous years, this marked the first time the two had shot the match together.

Smallbore Junior Casey Hollenbeck gives Highpower a Shot at Camp Perry

By Sheri Trusty, CMP Feature Writer

Three weeks before the 2023 National Matches, Casey Hollenbeck made the switch from smallbore to highpower shooting. He practiced only three times in the new discipline, and yet he cleaned the first three stages of the M16 EIC Match and ended with a second-place finish.

The 17-year-old from Marathon, Wisconsin, who was shooting with the Wisconsin Junior Rifle Team, said his years of smallbore put him in a good place entering the match.

"I just started shooting highpower three weeks ago, but I was excited. With shooting smallbore, I had a lot of the good fundamentals down," he said. "I just had to learn a few things."

He also needed the tools to compete. Hollenbeck walked into Camp Perry with virtually no highpower gear but a tremendous amount of support.

"Since I just started in highpower, I didn't have equipment at all. I started with my smallbore jacket and my glove. That's it," he said. "My smallbore coach, Randy Gregory, let me use his shooting cart, shooting box, mat and spotting scope. While I was here, I bought a highpower jacket. My highpower coach, Spencer McGowan, let me use his gun."

Hollenbeck is grateful for all the support that brought him to his first highpower match.

"I want to thank Randy and Spencer, all the other coaches, and the Wisconsin Junior Rifle Team," he said.

Hollenbeck made the last-minute switch to highpower by the request of McGowan.

"I shot smallbore for five or six years, and Spencer mentioned needing people to shoot highpower. Randy said he had just the guy," Hollenbeck said.

Hollenbeck said he was likely chosen because of his commitment to the sport.

"He recommended me because he knows I like



Casey Hollenbeck drew on his experience shooting smallbore when he made a quick transition to highpower at the CMP National Matches.

shooting, and it would pique my interest," he said.

As McGowan trained Hollenbeck in highpower, he built on Hollenbeck's already strong shooting skills.

"Most of the stuff I learned in smallbore transferred over, things like breathing, taking your time between shots, and making sure I'm taking a good shot. I had three practices before coming to Camp Perry, basically to get my zeros down," Hollenbeck said. "It's a lot of the same fundamentals – just a bit quicker pace. It's a lot of little things, but it's pretty much the same."

Those skills played out well in the M16 EIC Match.



Casey Hollenbeck, front, second from right, is a member of the Wisconsin Junior Rifle Team.

"I cleaned the first three stages. I was excited about that. I didn't know my scores were that good until somebody started telling me," he said. "I came in second overall. I lost by one point. I think I lost that point in standing. I shot an eight."

Hollenbeck said he believes the mistake developed in the few, brief moments he forgot his training.

"My coaches taught me to breath in between each shot and take my time. I didn't do that today, and my score was not as good. Then I changed back, and I shot better," he said.

Most of the time, Hollenbeck naturally shoots from a place of seasoned experience. He walks into a match with a mind clear of everything but the next shot.

"When I'm shooting, I forget the score and who I'm competing against, and I focus on shooting," he said. "I don't think about the other people. I just shoot."

Competing at Camp Perry manifested into a highpower learning experience for Hollenbeck.

"There was a lot of wind during the match, and it was pushing me around in standing. I was having a lot of trouble with that. The wind switched around a lot, but I'm learning how to watch for that. This has been a big learning experience," he said. "I've learned a whole bunch just shooting here. Random people helped me and gave me tips. You can ask almost anybody a question, and they'll answer it truthfully."

Hollenbeck enjoyed his first competition at Camp Perry.

"I love it here. This is awesome," he said. "I'll come back next year. I like how everyone is always willing to help."

Hollenbeck stumbled into marksmanship in junior high when he "was looking for something to do," he said. He shoots smallbore and trap with the Medford Rifle Club.

"The Medford Rifle Club has a lot of people. It's a good

size club," he said. "I just started trap this year. A couple of friends talked me into it. I like it."

After he graduates high school, Hollenbeck plans to learn welding, and he has a future goal of becoming a fabricator.

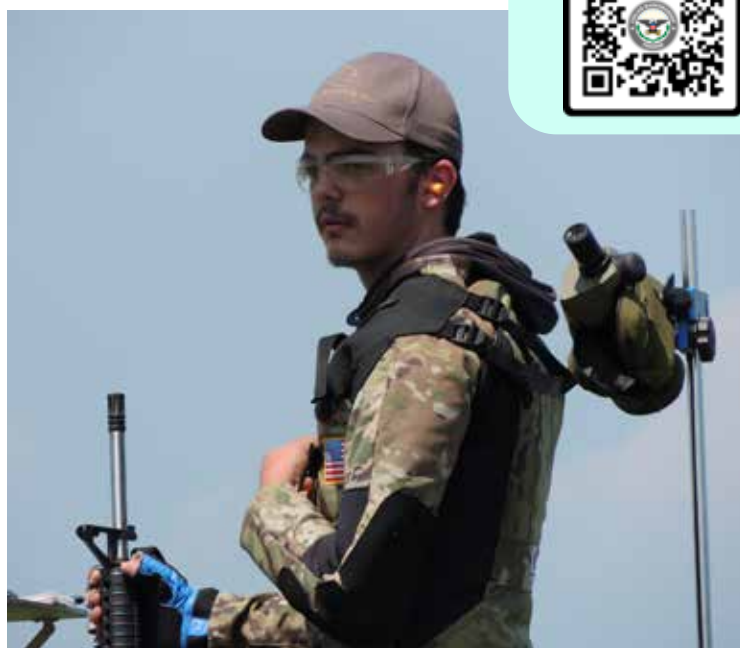
"But I'll shoot as long as I can," he said.

He hopes other teens will shoot as well.

"I would encourage them to try it. It's a lot of fun," he said. "It's definitely different from other sports. Rather than physically challenging, it's mentally challenging. People don't realize how much you think about your bad shots and your good shots. There are lows and highs, but it's a lot of fun."

Find a local CMP affiliated club by visiting the CMP website.

CLUB SEARCH



Casey Hollenbeck's first experience at Camp Perry makes him want to return next year.

The GOAT Sporter Coach - Col. Sean Mulcahy

By Sheri Trusty, CMP Feature Writer

Sporter Air Rifle Coach, Col. Sean Mulcahy, led the Nation Ford High School MCJROTC rifle team to an extraordinary championship record with a unique philosophy: he doesn't focus on winning. Between the time he formed the team in 2008 and his retirement in June, Mulcahy's teams earned 64 national championship titles and claimed 26 national record certificates. His coaching success came, he said, because he was more concerned with fostering character than creating winners.

"I don't focus strongly on winning. The joy of winning is fleeting," Mulcahy said. "I focus on performance and personal goals. I don't judge them on whether they came in first place or won a medal. I ask them, 'Did you do your best?' 'Did you refuse to give up?' If the answer is yes, then they have met my expectations. If you do your best, you can celebrate your success."

Mulcahy's philosophy doesn't mean he is soft on his cadets. On the contrary, he places high demands on them. Accountability is an underlying principle to his coaching style, and he insists his cadets meet standards of conduct that will breed lifelong success. Students who arrive late for practice or express sloppy commit to the team are called out.

"I instill basic life skills in them to make them successful in life. When you come in here, the golden rule is respect yourself and others," he said. "I hold them accountable. If I don't, I'm letting them down."

Part of that discipline is a heavy practice schedule. Mulcahy offers ten practice sessions every week, and his athletes must commit to five. Mandatory double practices begin two weeks prior to every national championship match. That means athletes are on the range for two hours before and two hours after school for two weeks. That discipline leads to strong character and a lot of championship titles.

"We haven't lost a match in almost five years at every level, and we've won championships by 100 points. Nine of my kids now shoot at the NCAA sporter level, which is pretty rare," Mulcahy said. "Basically, we out-practice and out-prepare every other team. We shoot 12 months a year.



Col. Mulcahy poses with his cadet, Abril DeCastro, who won the 2023 Junior Olympics Sporter Championship.

What makes a champion is weeks of training."

Mulcahy's JROTC rifle team has come a long way since he formed the group at Nation Ford High School in Fort Mill, South Carolina after retiring from the Marine Corps. In the beginning, the team hauled their equipment into classrooms, the cafeteria, or any other school space that was available for practice.

"Every time, we had to set up and take down equipment. We had to share space with cheerleaders, dance classes and other sports teams, so we could only practice three times a week," Mulcahy said. "We shot corner to corner. We were literally shoulder to shoulder."

Then Nation Ford built the team its own JROTC building equipped with a 25-point firing range, and the team converted from pump rifles to Crosman Challenger sporter class rifles. Those changes pivoted the team to success.

"I could control the space, and I began offering practices in the morning and after school. I had a number of kids come to two practices a day, and they became national champions," Mulcahy said.

Dedicated students who thrived under Mulcahy's coaching drove the team to success.

"My kids are hardworking, smart kids. I teach them to think for themselves," he said. "Shooting is so dynamic and multidimensional. You have to analyze every shot, call the shot, look at trends, and adjust the shot."

Mulcahy created an atmosphere at Nation Ford that allowed his athletes to focus more on developing character than winning medals. In the end, they did both.

"I tell my kids that it's not how you finish but how you perform. Most coaches don't understand the pressure they put on athletes with their expectations. This sport is measured in degrees of millimeters. The stress and anxiety will mess you up," Mulcahy said.

He has watched competitors on other teams have meltdowns under the pressure, so Mulcahy strives to create athletes with strong minds.

"We focus on sports psychology and protective thought. I tell my kids to clear their minds and meditate for 20 seconds before every shot," he said.

Then, when the inevitable bad shots come, Mulcahy's cadets are prepared.

"Everyone has a bad shot, but what's your reaction after a bad shot? That's the difference between success and imploding," he said. "Coaches don't get it. They hamstring their athletes with all the stress, and it makes it easier on my team."

Mulcahy ended his career by leading his team to first place in the 2023 3PAR Junior Olympic and CMP National Sporter Championships at Camp Perry on June 23-24. Mulcahy was proud of his team, but he is leaving them with something more enduring than another medal – the skills to be a good human.

"I want them to be happy and successful, and there's a formula for that," he said. "My captain is not my best shooter. My MVP is not my best shooter. It's the one with the servant's attitude who will do for others. It's the one who is unselfish, humble and kind."



Nation Ford HS MCJROTC finished first in both the 2023 Junior Olympics and CMP Sporter Air Rifle Championships in June 2023.

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