

Full-bore- Snoozing
Junior Rifle- C.W.G. and Toronto
bound.

The



December 2014

Buffalo Chips

MANITOBA PROVINCIAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION

Air Rifle 22 Long Rifle High Power Rifle

Like always, if you have any questions, scores, tips or advice, comments, or have something that you would like to have published in the For Sale / Wanted section, email me at mprachips@gmail.com



What a busy fall it has been.

With the exception of a couple full bore shooters competing down in the good old U.S.A. it is safe to say, they are hibernating. But the small bore half of the M.P.R.A has never been busier.

The Prairie Open was a great success and while only a very few achieved their cut score, everyone seemed to have a great time.

Canada Winter Games athletes have ramped up the training at our Shooting Performance Centre with the games just a couple months away while others are more focused on the Grand Prix and Pan Am Games in Toronto.

The Novice program is busy and appears to be full for the winter session. The scores are constantly improving with several Novice members progressing to practise on the SIUS targets starting next January. Great shooting everyone and thanks to Perry, Rob, Melissa and Alex for helping out.

Finally Gateway is open on Monday nights for 22lr, except when the Novice Program is there. Check the website calendar for the regular times or contact Leo if you have not previously received any of his Gateway e-mails.

Next Air match, Jan 3 at the Leola, 22LR at W.R.P.A. range on Jan 4th.

You heard it on the firing line

Having found Ella Mark's cut score record left behind from the day before, Alex Mark replied.

"She was covered in bling and happy as sh?t."

Ella walked away from the Prairie Open with three medals, a plaque and was named to the C.W.G. team. Amazing shooting Ella.

Thanks to Murray Sloane for finding this interesting article.

Hard Work – Pushing The Envelope

Posted on [August 25, 2014](#) by [jpoconnor](#)



How is your shooting going these days? Getting any better? Are your competition scores improving? Or are they stagnant? Are your competition scores a lot lower than your practice scores?

Many athletes “try” hard to improve and certainly want to improve. Yet, their progress slows and they spend lots of time on a score plateau. Lots of practice seems to have little effect.

Topic 1: Practice vs. Training

There is a time and a place in your training program for “just shoot” without evaluation, judgement, or “fixing” of problems. This is how you should shoot in a competition. Yet, most

practice sessions are constant evaluation, judgment, or “fixing” of problems. Remember, we will do what we are most used to doing when we are under pressure in competition. If we are constantly “fixing” things, we will find ourselves in that mode in a match. And our scores drop.

Training is not just shooting or just fixing. Training is focused activity. Yes, sometimes we do need to evaluate and adjust. Other times, we need to “just shoot” without care or concern for outcome (score) yet with intensity and focus on allowing the shot to unfold – properly. (No controlling!!!)

Topic 2: Staying in our Comfort Zone vs. Stepping outside our Comfort Zone

One of the most important aspects of training is forcing ourselves out of our comfort zone.

We only improve when we force ourselves (or our coaches force us) out of our comfort zone. Our sport is not about shooting at targets. No sport is about doing the actual sport. All sports, and indeed all performance activities (dance, singing, acting, public speaking, etc.), are about learning to thrive and excel under pressure in the spotlight and in the heat of the moment. Sport is about learning about ourselves, growing, and learning how to compete well.

We like to stay in our comfort zone. After all, it is comfortable! Outside that area, it is uncomfortable; who wants that? However, staying in our comfort zone does not allow us to stretch or grow our capabilities.

Intensity training – that is, training where the athlete cares about the outcome – is required in order to 1) learn how to thrive under pressure, 2) prevent choking, and 3) set the stage for entering flow state (the so-called “zone”).

The more time an athlete spends in intensity training, the faster they learn to thrive and the more confident they become in their abilities. This allows them to trust their training and “just shoot” without control. The results are amazing.

Topic 3: Putting The Concept To Work

A little over a week ago, I ran an advanced weekend training camp for a group of pistol athletes. Their ages were 19, two were 16, two were 14, three were 13, and two were 12. Their experience in target shooting ranged from a few months to a few years. We had six athletes from the Blocton (AL) Bullets and four girls from Georgia, including three from the Paulding County team. Both are excellent programs with great coaches and very motivated athletes.

We spent very little time in the mode to “tweak” or “fix” details about their position (angle to target, shoulder up or down, free arm position, etc.), area of aim (center, six, thin white, down in the white), trigger technique (lots of variations possible, though only some are helpful), or other physical and technical aspects of their shooting, since they and their coaches can work

on these items at their own training sessions. We did talk about a few concepts, but left it at that for this camp.

Yes, those items are critical to success and there is a time and place to make adjustments. (But not constant tweaking and fixing. That destroys performance.) However, for this camp, we did not want to change the athletes' setup, unless absolutely required, because we wanted them shooting the way they are currently familiar with. This is very important for what was to follow.

Instead, we focused on the mental and emotional aspects of high performance under pressure.

What holds us back from top scores? Once we handle the physical and technical topics (which is, paradoxically, where we spend most of our time and effort!), the entire rest of the game is mental and emotional.

It starts with ego. We want to be in control. We want to be inside our comfort zone. We want to "guarantee" the outcome. We want, we want, we want. And we look outside ourselves for the answers – and the excuses.

The very best performances come from deep inside ourselves. They come to us when we "let go" of control, trust ourselves and our training, and allow the shot process – or the dance, or the song, or the acting – to unfold, seemingly on its own. How do we learn to do this?

First, we must understand the concepts.

Understanding the dynamic of outcome (results, score, place rank, not finishing last, looking good, not messing up, etc.) vs. doing (just doing the activity, experiencing the moment, etc.) is the single most critical element in learning how to thrive and excel under pressure. Make the move about the move, not about the outcome. Make the shot about just doing the shot, not about the outcome – or about the last outcome. Not controlling the shot; just doing the shot.

Outcome, in its many forms, is in the past and the future. We have no control over the past and future! None! That's right, it is critical to understand that we have no DIRECT control over our own score! We wish we did! If someone claims otherwise, ask them why they don't shoot perfect scores. Is it because they are lazy or incompetent? Of course not! We do NOT have direct control of the outcome. We just wish we did.

The only thing we can control is ourselves. What we do, what we think, how we approach the doing. When we learn to manage ourselves properly – that is, in a manner that is conducive to top performance – then the desired outcome is much more likely. When we focus on the outcome itself, or control the doing, the desired outcome is much more unlikely. Yes, it is a paradox. Overcoming that seemingly "illogical" concept is paramount. Funny thing is, once it is understood, it is perfectly logical!

We have been training our deeper mind to shoot. We just don't realize that. Have you ever had the gun come down on target, arrive on the area of aim and instantly the shot is released, seemingly by itself, and get a really deep 10? And you were surprised or scared because you were not ready? The surprise is because the active thought part of the mind was distracted allowing the deeper part to shoot. The active part of the mind, and our visual system, are too slow for this sport, as they are for many other activities. The deeper mind, when trained and then ALLOWED to just "run the program" without interference, can produce stunningly good results on an otherwise unbelievably consistent basis.

Second, we must spend time in training to experience different modes and then do a lot of intensity training. Forget about the comfort zone!

After an initial discussion, we started the camp's shooting activities with some shooting on black paper. (For air pistol, we use 9×12 inch black construction paper.) The athletes were not used to this "target" so they were introduced to shooting with no aiming reference and no outcome. Disoriented at first, they soon discovered that they could "let go" and "just shoot" each shot. Thus, they could experience the "mysterious" mode of letting go and just shooting the shot that we so often hear about yet do not fully grasp. Experiential learning is the best form of learning, so we like to do training exercises that maximize the experiential aspect of learning.

The idea is to set up a properly optimized combination of position, balance, and natural point of aim. Then trust and recreate that feel for each shot. In essence, one's body becomes the sights. This is very disorienting at first, and eventually the ego has to "let go" of attempted control. And the athlete shoots freely. One of the 13 year old athletes, when first introduced to the black card several months ago at the age of 12, at that time described the feeling as "unconstrained" shooting.

Then we did some "traditional" shooting to let them feel comfortable about their baseline shooting. They were reminded of the "black card feel" and encouraged to dare to "let go" of their desire to control the shot and instead allow it to unfold. Shooting without "taking control" did get them a bit out of their comfort zone, but not very much. That was fine since this was a warm-up for what was to follow.

Then the real "fun" can begin! We use many different intensity drills or games. Some coaches and athletes see or hear of us doing these "games" and dismiss them as frivolous. Yet they are the key to high performance.

With a group of athletes of varying skill and experience levels, we chose to use a modified version of a classic drill called "First to Five Tens" which is a race to see who can be first get five shots that score 10 points. Go too slowly, in order to control the outcome or make it perfect, and you lose. Go too quickly, thus shooting sloppily, and you lose. The athlete must go quickly, with trust and no "controlling" of the shot, in order to win. This favors athletes who have a robust shot process, who trust it, and who allow it to run without interference or checking.

To run the drill, after a prep and sighting period, athletes are instructed to load, have guns down, and then “Go!” on command. After that, they shoot at their own pace. Each time they shoot a shot resulting in 10 points, they loudly call out how many tens they have: “One!” and so forth. It is interesting to see someone get all the way to “Four!” and then lose to someone who later catches them because they couldn’t get that fifth 10 point result.

This drill allows us to “handicap” different athletes so that mixed groups may participate together. Some of the athletes only could count tens, others tens and nines, and still others (the two 12 year old athletes who had limited experience in the standing position) tens, nines, and eights. This allows us to balance their perception of the difficulty of the challenge with their perception of their capabilities to meet the challenge. (This is also a critical component of high level performance and of entering the flow state, so we are already setting the stage for greater things later in their development.)

We ran this drill for four hours! Not continuously, of course; rest breaks are critical for health, injury prevention, and to allow mental recovery so they are fresh and “hungry” to go again. All afternoon the kids, including the youngest ones, asked “Can we do it again?” So we did!

With such a long dose of intensity, the athletes felt all the usual competition emotions. Joy, sadness, elation, despair, frustration, you name it. Emotions ran high at times. We validated the normalcy of those emotions under pressure and explained how to work through the feelings. They really challenged themselves and kept coming back for more.

As we kept going, the athletes improved. They realized they could shoot well when they found an optimal rhythm (not too slow and controlling, not too fast and sloppy), gave up the perceived “control” they craved, and just shot. They were able to do this because their deeper mind was completely familiar with everything (position, balance, grip, trigger, sights, process, etc.) and the athletes could take advantage of that deeper knowledge, which they had not previously understood. Note that if we had changed many of these variables, the deeper familiarity would have been upset and they would not have been able to benefit from the intensity training until several training sessions later.

As the day went on, many of the athletes wanted to raise their handicap level to make the drill harder. When the 12 year old athletes started consistently beating everyone, they asked me to raise their lower limit from eight to nine. Eventually, those same two wanted their limit raised to ten, to match where we eventually had all the older kids. The very next round after giving everyone no handicap advantage, one of the 12 year old athletes won the drill in short order against all the more experienced and older athletes. I’m not sure who was more surprised; her or the others. You should have seen the smile on her face! (And the belief in herself that it indicated!!!)

On that same note, two of the more experienced athletes, including a medalist from the recent PPP national championship, decided to have a one-on-one challenge. They raised their lower limit to 10.4 in order to count. It took them awhile, but they got their five count!

Another famous intensity drill is called 5 and 0 or 3 and 0. This is a pairs game for two evenly matched athletes. The score starts tied at 0-0 and someone is always at 0. After prep and sighters, the two athletes each shoot a shot. Whoever earns the higher score wins the shot and gets a point. (You can score by whole numbers, or by tenths if on electronic targets. You can also set a rule that in order to count at all, the shot must be at least a certain value.) The score is now 1-0. They each shoot again. If the person with the lead again earns the higher score on that shot, the game score now goes to 2-0. Conversely if the person in the lead has the lower score on the second shot, they lose their point and the game score goes back to 0-0. Remember, someone must always be at zero! First one to reach 5 (or 3) wins.

When Jamie (Beyerle) Gray and Matt Emmons were in college, they would play this game together. Frequently. Sometimes, they would have to interrupt one game – which had already been going on for 2 or 3 hours – to go have dinner, and then come back to finish. That is how evenly matched they were. Imagine that: hours of intensity training where EVERY shot counts in a big way. This is just one of the many reasons those two are such great competitors.

This is training – not practice.

Games like these almost make competitions sound easy. Almost.

Feel Center!

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Educational Notes

When the younger and/or less experienced athletes saw that we believed they could shoot well, and that we believed they were already good shooting athletes, they rose quite a bit. It has been proven that individuals and groups often can and will rise to the levels expected of them, as long as the expectations are fairly realistic and if the athletes know it is OK to make mistakes. We encourage all athletes, regardless of level, to think of themselves as better than they think they currently are and to believe that they will improve. After all, that is where they are striving to be, and we want them looking in that direction.

Throughout the entire weekend, we alternated between active shooting and round-table discussion. I asked lots of questions to get the athletes thinking and sharing experiences. Again, this maximizes their learning. Explain, experience, reflect together and share. It is a powerful teaching/learning methodology. It doesn't matter what the coaches know; it matters what the athlete learns, experiences, understands, and internalizes.

Teenagers, even young middle school athletes, when treated as young adults, when effectively trained, and when positively inspired, are capable of far more than they and many

adults think possible. As coaches and parents, we must be careful to be sure expectations are set appropriately, not too high or too low, be realistic, make the learning and sport about the journey of learning and self-discovery, not about the outcome, demonstrate that mistakes are a positive part of the learning experience, not bad things to be avoided, and keep the atmosphere positive, supportive, and friendly. Then step back and prepare to be amazed!

Top: Blocton Bullets and Paulding County pistol girls

Above, Katelyn Abeln training at the University of North Georgia

Below: OK, now to blow off a little steam. They have earned it!

Your comments and responses are always welcome.

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Other success stories from the past fall

Pictured below is Full Bore competitor Jared, enjoying his first goose hunt.

Small Bore Master, Ingrid took this buck in the Whiteshell Prov. Park, shooting her muzzleloader left handed, normally she shoots right handed but her deer did not know that.



Bob took this young guy during his first deer hunt in decades and did it with a 45ACP.



Novice athlete Alex has been with his dad on several hunts but this was his first real deer hunt. While he did not get a deer, they saw some and came home with this great photo.



High performance coach, Rob, took this beautiful deer while hunting with his dad.



Novice athletes Shyla and Morganne enjoying the challenge of busting baby aspirin on the last night of the Fall Novice Program.



September 28 2014 was a cold , windy and rainy day where about a dozen brave souls and mpra members came out to Miller to enjoy a fun shooting day. More than 700 rounds of ammunition were shot away that day. There were static targets and moving ones as well. The day started off with maybe we should cancel but enough brave souls showed up and the games began.

It went so well that we had to send everyone home at 3:00 pm otherwise they would have stayed. We have to give thanks to Bruce McDonald for proving us with an arsenal of weapons from .22 pistols to old and very reliable rifles.

Everyone had a great time and Bruce's entourage came out as that days winner at shooting at the moon for the beginner category. Ian Mitchell showed the rest us how it was done a seasoned shooting mpra member. Medals and prizes were donated by Michael Nipping, thanks Mike.

Next MPRA .22 match this Sunday Jan. 4 at Miller see you there

Thanks Paul lemire





**Hope you had a safe and Merry Christmas
so enjoy the New Year outdoors or at the range.**

