

2011 ORPA Adult Smallbore Teams at the National Championships by Rick Sarver

With the 2011 NRA National Matches completed, I'm sure there are smiles and frowns amongst the competitors. There are winners and there are competitors. I am one of the latter — not a personal performance to remember. One might say I'd like to just forget this year's version of the matches but I can't for a few reasons.

1. The weather was one to remember (heat in the 90s consistently and humidity of equal amounts).

2. Performances to remember by Ohio's sponsored adult smallbore teams.

We could say Ohio shined in the team events brighter than I can remember in some time. Ohio has fielded several overall winning smallbore adult teams in the past but as a complete package I think this year to be one of the finest. With only one Ohio Rifle and Pistol Association adult position team being entered, we find an Any Sight result of first in the Master Class. This event I did not witness but was on post. It was a scorching hot day for an event that lasts some two hours. With 90 degrees and 90 percent humidity, leather shooting coats, sweatshirts, shooting pants, hats, gloves and other items only add to the discomfort that our adults endured on their way to their first place finish.

Our ORPA Adult Prone team fared well in their events also. The prone team events sold out early as the team cards were purchased on Friday prior to the team matches to be fired on Tuesday. At the time of purchase, they were practically sold out and requests were still coming in for space that was unavailable. To help eliminate disappointment, the match director opened another range (Vaile) to give more spots for additional teams. Ohio's Master shooters were placed on this newly available range whereas the Ohio Expert shooters were placed on the Young range with the early entries. Being as this may, I personally was unable to witness the Experts doing something very special.

Our ORPA Adult Expert Prone Team has shown improvement throughout the year by each individual in their match results and they brought it all together on this team day to place second overall in the Any Sight prone team event at the National Matches. This second place finish was only bested by the US Army Marksmanship Training Unit which has been one of the best teams in the world for many years. Our Ohio Expert Adult team consists of civilians that work everyday jobs and only do this sporting event for the pure enjoyment. Our Ohio Expert team shooters were: Bret Higgins (400-31) Carey, Ohio; Chris Beal (396-17) Lewis Center, Ohio; Doug Keener (400-24) Madison, Ohio; and Jeff Perry (399-22) Laura, Ohio with a total of 1595-94. This Expert team shows that the future of smallbore prone shooting in Ohio is bright.

Our ORPA Adult Master Prone Team placed just behind the Experts in third place

overall in these National Matches with a total score of 1593-95. The Masters consisted of: Kevin Nevius (399-30) Gibsonburg, Ohio; Rick Sarver (399-24) Pataskala, Ohio; Garald Wise (399-23) Wooster, Ohio; and Carl Jooss (396-23) New Albany, Ohio. The Masters coach was a two-time National Champion, Paul Gideon (Gambier), who has withdrawn from the 2011 shooting year to rehabilitate his shoulder from a strain that prohibits him from shooting prone.

A sidebar to the Any Sight prone team event found that ~ of the 12 shooters to have placed on the top three teams overall, Ohio fielded nine of these shooters as Shane Barnhart was shooting as a member of the Army MTU winning team and he is formerly from Ashley, Ohio and we hope to see him back in his home state some day after his Army commitment I is over. Not a bad day at all for Ohio shooters which makes the 2011 Smallbore National Matches one to remember.