

Fire, flood, famine and pestilence at Idaho State Championship

Herewith, our President's match report:

2008 Idaho State Field Target Championship

By Ron Gill



Ron Gill, Ash Covey, George Gardner and Ray Carter

Piston

1st: 55/72, George Gardner, .177 Theoben Evolution, Bushnell 6-24, JSB L,
2nd: 36X72 Ray Carter, RWS M52, BSA 4-12X40, .177 JSBH
3rd: 34X72. Ron Roberts, HW 97, Bushnell Trophy 6-18X40mm, .177 Beeman Trophy

4th: 28X72 Shorty Miller, Gamo 440, Gamo 4x32mm, .177 JSBL

Pre-Charged

1st: 56X72 Ron Gill, Air Arms S400, Leapers 8-32X56mm .177 CPH
2nd: 55X72 Ash Covey, Daystate XII, Simmons 44Mag, 4-12 X40 .177 JSBH

Report

On Saturday Sept 20th, we held the 2008 State Championship match at the Oregon Trail Range in Pocatello, Idaho. We had fire, storm, pestilence and famine. It was a really good day.

Dark clouds and lightning threatened as our 72 shot championship match started, but the worst swung to the north as we only had sprinkles while we were shooting. George (the match director) was ready to go. When I turned the pre-match meeting over to him, he just said "Let's Go!"

The day before we set out 24 targets over 9 lanes. Our course starts in a gully bottom where all the shots are up

hill except for the very closest. The next three lanes shoot down into or across the draw from the top of the right hand bank. Then on lane 5, it goes back down into the draw for some heavy sagebrush cover where we had a standing shot where the sagebrush obscured the target when the shooter was in the sitting or kneeling position. Ray Carter did his best offhand shooting of the year on this lane. Then the course runs up a side draw with a windswept hill on the far side. Usually winds sweep up the draw and across the hillside. The site faces the Snake River Plain where wind can build for over 200 miles without obstruction.

I was paired with Ash Covey. Ash shoots a Daystate and was the only other pre-charged shooter in the match. On lane one, our first lane, Ash missed one out of 9 targets. I choked hitting only 4 targets. It took me until lane five to catch up, and from lanes six seven and eight the lead seesawed back and forth by one point until the last lane. Where Ash misjudged the range on the near target and I could not get a hit on the far target. This really showed us that range finding and sight settings are a major part of the game. Our final scores were 55 to 56. It was the most fun I have had in years of shooting, and it was made especially memorable by Ash's sportsmanship.

We had a videographer from the Idaho State Journal Come, and shoot video and interviewed George and myself. I hope it attracts some new shooters to our club.

Every time I saw George he would pump his fist or give the thumbs up sign, but he never talked. "George is really pumped," said Ash. George Gardner has been described as a champion of the underdog gun, and this year he shot a 12 foot pound Theoben piston gun. George has been making long shots with this gun. Earlier in the year he hit a 55 yard squirrel 3 times in a row. Today he hit a target twice that was only downed one other time during the match. It was at 49 yard uphill on a windswept 20% slope. Good shooting George.

In 4 years of Championship matches, this was the first one without out of area entrants. We all missed the companionship and competition that your visitors always bring. The match remained undiminished though. Our club members built the course, painted the targets, laid out the lanes, showed up to shoot when there was snow on the ground. It was their day. Ron Roberts, one of the original gang of three, who shoots an HW 97 and Shorty Miller with his Gamo 440 rounded out the group. Springers were the predominant air gun, just as they are in the world of air guns.

The Match had an unexpected interruption when we looked up toward the pistol range and saw smoke coming from behind the 50 yard backstop. "We got to get up there now", said Ash, so 4 air gunners joined about 20 shooters form the pistol range in controlling the fire while others called the Chubbuck (the local) Fire Department. The CFD came with their brand new heavy pumper and hosed down the hot spots. Shorty had the most fun riding on the Heavy pumper until the fire chief told him he had to get off. "I was hoping to wear one of the firefighter's helmets." said Shorty with a mischievous grin. The fire covered an area of a large apartment but would have been a lot larger if it hadn't been for the prompt action of David Craven's three weapon shooters and others in the firing bays.

My dog, Balin, who had attended the last two matches, has been very sick for the last four days. He went to the Vet, and was found guilty of eating too many grasshoppers. He is on the mend after a couple of shots.

The floods came afterwards. Just as we were leaving, a hail shower reduced visibility to less than 200 feet. Luckily, we got all the match stuff put away just before the storm hit.

For you out of area folks reading this, you are all invited to any of our matches, but especially to the 2009 Championship next year.