

# **ACT Team to Bendigo - Captain's Report**

## **Team Goals**

When we started out we had only 2 goals:

1. To have FUN!
2. Personal improvement – to all be shooting better in April 2014 than we were a year before.

**I am delighted to report that the Team has achieved those goals!**

## **Equipment Preparations**

The team preparations consisted of a focus on getting our equipment as good as we possibly could before we started formal team practices. All team members completed a detailed checklist then we carried out:

- Gear checks including bore- scoping of barrels, triggers being cleaned and adjusted, sights were checked and calibrated by Mal Mackenzie
- 100m chrono checks of current ammo and zeroing of sights
- 1000y chrono checks of trial batches of ammo. A specified target range of 2950-3000fps was achieved by all. The use of HBC and Berger 155.5 projectiles meant they had the same BC. This had additional benefits of consistency for the coaches.
- During this process, group sizes reduced significantly.

## **Mound Technique**

By the time we had carried out the above equipment preparations, we were ready to practice our mound technique:

- The Comms system has cable-connected electronic headsets allowing communication between our two coaches and master coach to be clear, frequent and immediate. This is the same system that the Australian team used to win the Mackinnon match in Bisley last year.
- We had the coaches stay in position and shooters got down on the left and right of the coach, with the right shooter being coached 'over the top'. This is the same technique as the Australian team.
- Minor adjustments were made to position and process as we trained over two very hot days.

## **Wind Coaching**

The selection of Anthony as wind coach was a calculated decision based on a fine record as a champion F-Standard shot. With little time to prepare, Anthony learnt quickly and performed better than I could have ever have hoped for ....in fact, my last NSW state team in Bendigo contained two of Australia's finest legendary wind coaches... they struggled by comparison to Anthony's performance!

David McIntosh and Ray Jones once again combined excellently as shooter/coaches and handled the demands of double duties. In order to help control the mound technique, I was connected to both coaches via our Comms system ....this proved to be of enormous benefit to coordinate with the coaches on zero calibration of shooting pairs, centring of groups, advising on wide shots on adjacent targets, using the next shooter for a sighter during significant wind changes and comparing notes on conditions.

The Comms system control unit has connections for another two headphones and it is recommended that two further headsets be purchased so that the plotters can also communicate more effectively.

## **Shooters**

Like all teams, this team contained people of different levels of skill, experience and form....one thing was common though....everyone was trying to do their best to improve through the training and right through the matches....that is all a Captain can ask for!

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We collected the best scores everyone had shot at each range over the past few years, which became our personal best (PB) scores to date. These PBs became mini goals for many and it was fabulous to see quite a few of the team exceed their previous PB during the training, lead up club shoots, the matches and during the Queens. This provided further evidence of improvement as we progressed.

## The Matches

The team got away to its best start ever at 300y in the Merrett...we were only 8 points down and at that point being in 5th place and even ahead of eventual winner Victoria. In the 900y 15-shot MacArthur Onslow and the final 1000y Neville Holt matches we finished 5th ahead of SA and WA respectively, as well as North Queensland and Northern Territory. Full team and individual scores are attached.

David McIntosh performed very consistently and reliably, finishing with the top overall aggregate for the team. Ray Jones came into great form on the final day, shooting a pair of 50-6s at both 900yds and 1000yds. These and other performances from the more experienced team members are to be expected. More importantly however, it was great to see the effort put in and improvement by the newer members in the team. David Higgins particularly stepped up with consistent shooting and a PB at 600 yards in the Merrett Match.

## Helpers

I'd also like to thank Rae Foot as official Manager for her tremendous preparation efforts in getting our uniforms organised and for fund raising which helped ease the way. Whilst Rae could not make it to Bendigo, we were very fortunate to have the assistance of several other ACT club members, being Cedric May and Lex Lane who check-scored for all matches as well as Claire Maher and Shane Dowling who scored for the team and who helped with stats and all the 'roustabout' items that crop up. This assistance was invaluable and it certainly meant that the team could focus on performance as much as possible.

## An Invitation

This report also doubles as an invitation to all those other A, B and C graders who are looking to improve their performances....the next team is scheduled for Perth (TBC) in September 2015 and the time is NOW to start thinking about putting your hand up for the next ACT team.

Quarterly training events are being scheduled so that those serious about wanting to learn and improve can participate in a program focused on continuous improvement.

Finally, I'd like to congratulate each and every one of the ACT Team members this year on giving your very best. I hope you enjoyed yourself and I look forward to us nudging a podium finish in the Merrett Match next time.

Thank you for the honour of allowing me to be your Team Captain in 2014.



Steve Negus