

ACT Team to Sydney - Captain's Report

1. Team Goals

The plan was to build on the development from Bendigo in 2014 to build a competitive team. As the matches were being held in Sydney, this was an opportunity to field our strongest team in some time. It was also an opportunity to bring along several developing shooters to learn from the experience and strengthen our depth for the future.

We had only 2 main goals:

1. To have FUN!
2. To improve on the results from 2014. (I dared to dream that we might push for a podium finish following our best placing of 5th in Bendigo.)

I am delighted to report that the Team has achieved both those goals! We finished with three 3rd placings and certainly let the other teams know that we were there to compete...not just to make up numbers.

2. Equipment Preparations

The team preparations consisted of a focus once again 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 serviced where required
- 100m chrono checks of current ammo and zeroing of sights
- 1000y chrono checks of trial batches of ammo. A specified target range of 2950 to 3000fps was achieved by all. The use of Berger 155.5 projectiles meant the team had a consistency in hand loading approach, which was also a benefit for the wind coaches.
- During this process, group sizes reduced significantly.

3. Mound Technique

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

- The use of the Comms system was second nature this year. Two additional headsets were purchased for the plotters on the recommendations after Bendigo. Many thanks to Mark Garbutt for taking charge of the mound set up and pack up.
- Once again 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.
- Practices were held in February, May and June, with several team members practicing in smaller groups at other times. The focus was on making sure that we got away to a good start with 300m, then consolidating at 600m and capitalising on our good long range shooting. The latter was done at 900m with the theory being that if we could group at 900m, then 800m in Sydney would be comparatively easier (which to our delight proved to be the case!)

4. Practice matches

In consideration that quite a few of the team members had not competed in a team before, two matches were organised. The NSW Team was invited to Canberra to practice in June, but unfortunately this was washed out (though a certain team member took much pleasure in saying on Facebook that NSW had forfeited!).

To reciprocate, ACT was invited to compete in the NSW Team versus NSW Rest Match ("State Vs The Rest") in August in Sydney. The weather was kinder and this was an excellent preparation for us, allowing us to obtain elevations and sighting whilst competing in match conditions. Whilst our total of 1933x2000 was well behind the Rest team (1969) and

ACT Team to Sydney - Captain's Report

NSW Team (1987), the match served its purpose. Four weeks later we would finish with a nice 1964 x 2000 in the Merrett Match to record ACT's best ever score!

Recommendation: For future teams, the ACT Team should seek to host and compete against NSW on our range and also to compete in their NSW Vs The Rest match.

5. Captaining and Wind Coaching

This team had a full complement of 15 members, so with shooters also carrying out dual roles as wind coaches and plotters, there was also the opportunity to give a number of members experience in the Captain role. I was delighted to have Mark Garbutt jump into this role so capably. His organisation and knowledge of procedures were an asset to the team. Thankyou Mark!

Paul Simmons must be in an exclusive group who in their first team, gets picked to Captain it! Paul had his 'game face on' for the Bruce White match at 300m and spurred the team on to a wonderful performance. Work beckoned after that, but Paul's continued improvement and dedication by attending for the first day are great signs for the future.

Liz Colquitt was also appointed to Captain the team in the 800m Macarthur-Onslow match and did a fine job in carrying out her duties, also spurring the team on to a very good performance.

Anthony Pedersen backed up solidly from Bendigo and coached a number of shooters to their personal best scores. As he is an F-Class shooter making the transition to iron sights for these matches, I am grateful to Anthony for dedicating himself to continuing to improve his wind reading and coaching skills for the benefit of the ACT Team.

David McIntosh once again contributed strongly as a shooter/coach and handled the demands of double duties very well. On the second day, we had the luxury of a full team and welcomed Shaun Wingrove to the coaching chair for the day. As he did in Bisley for the Australian team, Shaun acquitted himself very well and this gives us more development options for the future.

6. The Matches

The 300m Bruce White match was our Achilles heel in Bendigo and we finished last of 8 teams there. What a turnaround this year! We started strongly and continued to shoot quickly to be the first finished on the range. I am sure that our loud clapping and cheering of EVERY team member (no matter what the score) rattled some of the other teams. We finished 3rd behind NSW and Queensland, but beating Victoria by a point. This was a great start and special mentions go to David Higgins with a personal best of 75-10 and to our 'B' grader in the team, Liz Colquitt, who shot superbly for a lovely 74-9.

ACT got away to its best start ever at 300m in the Merrett...we were only 8 points down and well positioned. We fell away in the middle, but our long range training showed at 800m when we finished on 498 x 500 for a record for an ACT Team. This even warranted mention by the NSW Team Captain, Tony Moon, at the presentation dinner.

In the 800m 15-shot MacArthur-Onslow, we shot alongside NSW and kept them honest. We finished 3rd only one point behind NSW, with Victoria counting us out for second place by 2Vs. Queensland were not so cocky now! The aggregate of the two 15-shot matches is for the McGowan Trophy and we again finished 3rd, a point behind second-placed Queensland and the rampant NSW team. To knock the previous winners Victoria into 4th place was a very commendable Team performance.

ACT Team to Sydney - Captain's Report

We also finished with a number of 4th places in the remaining matches on the second day to give ACT our best overall result in a decade. Full team and individual scores are attached.

New ACT recruit, Donna Negus, displayed the form that won her selection in the Australian team for South Africa. She performed very consistently and reliably, finishing with the top overall aggregate for the team. There were quite a few solid performances and PBs by a number of the team and they are to be congratulated for putting in the effort to achieve that. We did have our hiccups, but all credit to those who experienced some misfortune in battling on to maintain a very creditable overall result for the team. We had a very strong and supportive team culture and it was good to see those shooters bouncing back to their usual good form.

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! I thank you for your dedication and camaraderie in what was one of the best teams I have been involved in.

7. Helpers

I'd also like to thank Shane Dowling as official Manager for his valuable assistance in the practices and for organising new team shirts (whose late arrival was outside of his control). Unfortunately Shane became ill and could not make it to Sydney, but we were very fortunate to have the assistance of Claire Maher as acting Manager, who was of great help in organising cards, checking of sights, ordering lunches and a host of other details.

Other ACT club members, Cedric May and Steve Lamb, check-scored for all matches which was much appreciated for taking a great burden off the team members. This assistance was invaluable and it certainly meant that the team could focus on performance as much as possible.

8. 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 in September 2018 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 gaining a podium finish in the Merrett Match next time.

Thank you for the honour of allowing me to be your Team Captain in 2016.



Steve Negus