

Scoped Field Rifle and 3-Positional

by Rod Frisby

The Scoped Field Rifle and 3-Positional discipline offers a wide range of rifle shooting experiences and opportunities. The discipline has consisted of Field Rifle and SSAA 3-Positional events for many years, with Field Rifle being accepted into SSAA competition in 1970.

In 2005, Scoped Air Rifle was introduced to the discipline. The first Scoped Air Rifle National Championships were held in Adelaide in 2006 and this year, the Air Rifle events were part of the 2007 Easter Nationals program. In 2006, the Inaugural Pacific Regional Shooting Championships were held and included the first Smallbore 3P Rimfire event in Australia to be sanctioned by the National Rifle Association of America.

At the recent SSAA National Discipline Sub-committee there was discussion and agreement that all SSAA disciplines need to consider and develop their involvement and participation in international competitions. Strengthening our international



3-Positional sitting position.

relationships with other countries through participation in international competitions such as the NRA Nationals at Camp Perry, Ohio, USA, and at events such as the Pacific Regional Shooting Championships will support and assist to maintain our genuine reasons and needs for firearms.

For the Field Rifle and 3-Positional discipline this involves our continued participation in Smallbore NRA matches at Camp Perry and in the Pacific Regional Shooting Championships. A SSAA Australian shooting team participated in the NRA 3P Smallbore match at Camp Perry in 2004 and 2006 and a team will be selected to represent SSAA at the 2007 US NRA Smallbore Nationals.

The matches that now comprise the Field Rifle and 3-Positional discipline are described below. One could say there is a natural order of progression through the matches, as skills are developed and shooters become more experienced. Of course, not all participate in all events, but some do. The events are diverse and some shooters tend to specialise in one or two matches only. Introduction to the sport can be through air rifle or rimfire events moving up to centrefire, then graduating on to the more precise and demanding 3-Positional events. All of the events are graded, so shooters only compete against others of the same skill and experience levels when competing in matches.



The Air Rifle event is a good place to start.

Field Rifle

Field Rifle is a shoot designed around the four most used field positions, over various distances for both rimfire and centrefire rifles. Participation in this event will improve the hunter's marksmanship under rifle range conditions and also teach the shooter the limitations and capabilities of their equipment. This also provides an environment for the experimentation and development of field or hunting rifles.

Centrefire field rifles may be of any calibre and chambered for any centrefire factory or wildcat cartridge. A bolt-action repeater is ideal, but any type of action that is safe can be used, including bolt, lever and slide. Self-loading actions were used on a regular basis before their ban in 1997. The weight limit is 5kg including bolt, empty magazine, sights and all accessories, except a sling.

Rimfire field rifles have the same specifications as centrefire rifles, except they must be chambered only for the .22LR rimfire cartridge and not weigh more than 4kg including the bolt, empty magazine,

sights and all accessories, except a sling.

The course of fire for Rimfire and Centrefire Field Rifle is fired in the following order:

- Rapid Fire is 12 rounds rapid fire in four bursts of three shots in each burst, to be fired from the standing unsupported position at a distance of 25m. The time allowed to fire each burst of three shots is to be 15 seconds.
- Standing position is 10 rounds single loading, slow fire, from the standing unsupported position at a distance of 25m for rimfire and 50m for centrefire.
- Standing Post Rest is 10 rounds single loading, slow fire, from the standing position with a post rest position at 50m for rimfire and 100m/yards for centrefire.
- Sitting/Kneeling Post Rest is 10 rounds single loading, slow fire, from the sitting or kneeling position with a post rest position at 50m for rimfire and 200m/yards for centrefire.

SSAA 3-Positional

3-Positional is a sporting rifle event using the same rifles that are used in Field Rifle. The event is a slow-fire event with prone, standing and kneeling/sitting positions required to be used. Kneeling or sitting is optional for the third position. Most competitors elect to shoot the sitting position because it allows for a position with a relatively lower centre of gravity and is generally more stable. Higher scores are usually shot in the sitting position. This is a great event for improving fine accuracy

and refining shooting skills.

Many field rifle shooters also shoot these 3-Positional events as the same rifles can be used. A shooting jacket is allowed for 3-Positional and can help with improving scores. The benefit of a shooting jacket is that it helps to isolate the rifle from the heartbeat of the shooter and makes position shooting more stable and more comfortable.

The course of fire is 20 shots in the 30 minutes for rimfire at 50m and centrefire at 100m. It is fired in the following order:

- Prone position is where the shooter lies on the surface of the shooting station or uses a shooting mat. The rifle is supported by both hands and the shoulder only, with the shooter's forearm forming an angle that must not be less than 30 degrees.
- Standing is where the shooter stands erect on both feet without support of any kind for either the rifle or the shooter, with no part of the body or limbs to touch the ground or any other object, except the soles of the boots/shoes.
- Sitting is where the shooter sits on the surface of the shooting station, with no part of the body or limbs touching any support or object.
- Kneeling is where, for a right-handed shooter, the shooter touches the ground only with the sole of the left boot/shoe and the lower part of the right leg, including foot and knee. The buttocks must rest on the right foot or heel and the left elbow on the left knee. No other part of the body or limbs is to touch any support or object, except that a kneeling roll may be used under the right instep.



Field Rifle rapid fire. The rifle does not leave the shoulder.



Field Rifle - the sitting post position.



3-Positional prone position.

SSAA COMPETITION - THE DISCIPLINES ISSUE

Scoped Air Rifle

Recently accepted into SSAA competition, the Scoped Air Rifle event provides a training and development platform for international and national rifle competitions. Positions of prone, standing and kneeling as used in international and national rifle competitions are used to develop skills and knowledge. The range and various types of air rifles are extensive and any rifle type, compressed air, carbon dioxide or spring can be used.

Air rifles are limited to .177" (4.5mm) calibre to avoid damage to target frames and backstops, but any rifle in that calibre is allowed. Telescopic sights are allowed. An international match target air rifle or field target air rifle with a scope, are all ideal for this match. Air rifles are inherently accurate over 10m, so if you cannot afford a new air rifle, look for a secondhand one. Air rifles retain their accuracy and usually last

a long time.

Air rifle shooting is relatively cheap and a good place to start in the sport of rifle shooting. Air pellets are much cheaper than live ammunition at about \$5 to \$9 per 500, compared to rimfire ammunition at about \$50 to \$90 per 500 for ammunition of comparable quality. Once the initial capital investment in the air rifle is made, the cost on a weekly basis is quite small.

Shooting with scoped air rifles seems to be increasing in popularity. Air rifles provide a perfect training medium; indeed, modern air rifles are recoilless and thus allow the shooter to follow through on the shot and see if the sights were moved as the shot breaks. If a person learns to shoot an air rifle properly, moving onto rimfire and centrefire rifles will be easier as the basic skills required to shoot well have already been learned.

There are two Scoped Air Rifle matches:

- 10m Scoped Air Rifle, which is shot from the standing unsupported position at 10m. The course of fire is 40 shots in four relays of 10 shots in 15 minutes.
- 10m 3-Positional Scoped Air Rifle, which is shot from the prone, kneeling and standing positions at 10m. The course of fire is 60 shots, with 20 shots in 30 minutes from each position.

NRA 3-Position Any Sight

This is the ultimate match in regard to rifles and equipment. Basically, any rifle in .22 long rifle calibre and any sight, telescopic or aperture, is allowed. Palm rests and hook buttplates are also permitted. Think of an international smallbore free rifle, put a scope on it, and you have it. The 10-ring is only 10.4mm in size and a quality rifle and quality ammunition is needed to produce

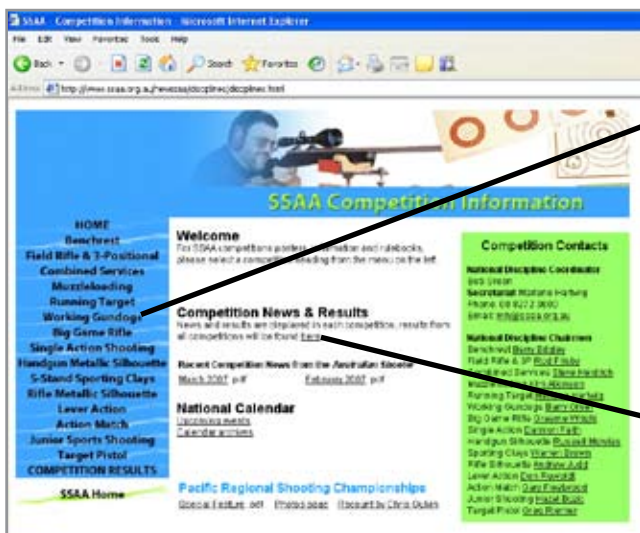


acceptable groups at 50m.

This match has been included in the 2007 Easter Nationals for the first time, and is the match the Australian shooting team members have been competing in at Camp Perry since 2004 and last year at the Pacific Regional Shooting Championships. It will be one of the matches used to select a team for the US for this year.

Course of fire is 60 shots at 50m, with 20 shots prone in 20 minutes, 20 shots standing in 30 minutes and 20 shots kneeling in 30 minutes. The official NRA course of fire is 120 shots, with 40 shots from each position.

If you are into rifle shooting, take the time to check these Field Rifle and 3-Positional matches out. ●



Check out the SSAA Competition Information section at www.saa.org.au

