

October 2020 Light Rifle Match Report

Mark Dorlay NRA Light Rifle RBGC Club Championship Match of 2020

Simon Bailey

What a difference a year makes. This time last year we were suffering the heat of a long hot year. This year the temperatures seem to have dropped on cue with fall in the air. The match setup started under still and very cool conditions, 38 degrees and bluebird clear skies – a very refreshing morning.

Thirteen shooters enjoyed the conditions, including two first time attendees. Notably absent was Mark Dorlay who passed away in July, and in whose memory this match is named. Despite holding many Light Rifle honors, Mark was never able to win the Club Championship despite some close finishes. Match Director Simon Bailey made a personal commitment to himself to attempt to unseat multiple year champion George Wilson to honor Mark's memory. Multiple other shooters brought their A-Game, so the competition was fierce yet friendly.

After the safety briefing, an explanation of the match procedures for the new shooters and a sight-in period, competitors were called to the line for the first stage just after 9:45AM under strong direct sunlight. Despite a migraine the night before that forced him to bed by 9:00 PM and made the bright light a challenge along with a case of nerves and uncertain fine motor control, Bailey started out strong and jumped out to a slight lead by firing a 93-2X, with the two X's the result of a two shot single hole taking out the white center of the A-32 target. Meanwhile, Chris Sagar using his suppressed 10-22, scored a 91-0X and King Stracke, focused, taking his time and shooting very deliberately, shot a 90-0X.

In the second stage, Wilson, who shot an uncharacteristic 84-0X in stage one, returned to form putting up a 90-0X, while Bailey, and the very focused Stracke put up 91-0's, as did marksman Kirk Swanson. At the end of two, Bailey led by 3 points over Stracke, with Rick Purcell in third (184-2X, 181-0X, 177-0X).

In stage three, despite Bailey's internal struggle, he managed to post a 92-0X, to keep his lead ahead of Wilson and Stracke, who also posted 92-0X's. Swanson put up an 84-0X to drop back slightly but still held onto 1st Marksman.

The fourth stage is where the standings took a major shakeup. Despite Stracke's intense focus, a momentary lapse in concentration allowed a shot to get away and drop him back, posting 81-0X. Wilson, back on track, fired a 91-0X while Purcell, breaking out of the high 80's, fired a 93-0X. Swanson put a 94-3X on the board, while Bailey, perhaps with some intervention from above, put up a solid 95-0X on the board to take a 14 point hold on 1st place with a 371-2X. Purcell and Wilson were neck and neck at 357-0X while Stracke ended the 4th stage with 354-0X and Swanson had a 352-3X.

Wilson and Purcell were not finished yet, however, with Purcell shooting a 5th stage 93-0X and Wilson putting up a 94-0X. Bailey managed to overcome Jell-O like muscles, a racing heartrate and twitchy nerves, to put up a rare 96-1X and fend off the field.

With the sixth stage at hand, everyone was feeling the pressure. Stracke made a strong showing by putting a 93-0X on the board to take 1st Sharpshooter, Swanson fired a solid 95-2X to take 1st Marksman, while Wilson and Purcell swapped a point to end tied for second at 540-0X. The tie was broken in Wilson's favor, and he took second place with Purcell in third overall.

With Bailey's final effort of 91-1X, the "Team" of Bailey and Dorlay took first place with a 558-4X – a personal best for Bailey, the highest point total at any match since 2016, and a tribute accomplished. In discussions after the match Bailey admitted that this was physically the hardest match he has fired since his early competition days. Experienced and accomplished shooter Wilson admitted to being nervous himself and asked Bailey how it felt to be chased. Bailey admitted that it felt easier to chase than to be chased!

Please see the match bulletin on the website for the full results and congratulations to all of the winners.

Simon Bailey	558-4X Match Winner – 2020 Club Champion
George Wilson	540-0X 2 nd Place (Won Tie)
Rick Purcell	540-0X 3 rd Place (Lost Tie)
Paul Lemley	466-0X 1 st Master (Unclassified)
King Stracke	535-0X 1 st Sharpshooter
Kirk Swanson	538-5X 1 st Marksman

At the completion of the formal match, two fun "One Shot" matches were held with the prize being a brick of ammo for each match.

The first fun match, affectionately known as the Barney Fife match, is a true one shot affair, with the shooter who fires his bullet closest to scoring a perfect center shot winning the match. This match was dominated by the two women competitors with Beth Reynolds firing the tightest 9 only to be edged out by first time shooter Angelina Lemley who clipped the 10 ring to take a brick of SK Standard ammo as her prize.

The second fun match is a single elimination match, with only the best half of the field advancing to the next round. Thirteen shooters were quickly reduced to eight – Kirk Swanson, Simon Bailey, Rick Purcell, Paul Lemley, George Wilson, Chris Sagar, Tom Hollingsworth, and Brad Reynolds. Eight became four – Bailey, Swanson, Purcell, and Hollingsworth. Four shooters became two, with finalist Kirk Swanson besting Simon Bailey for a second brick of ammo.

And so, ends another fun and successful NRA Light Rifle season. I encourage all readers to join us next year. The venue is fun, family friendly, has low equipment requirements, is competitive and builds off-hand shooting skills.