

RBGC March 2019 Rimfire Match Report

The opening tournament of the 2019 River Bend Gun Club Rimfire Benchrest season was greeted with sunny skies, very light wind and unwelcome cold temperatures – still it was a nice departure from our almost incessant rainy weekends. Eight competitors were on-hand on MP1 with the mercury reading just 33 degrees. With an anticipated high of 74, competitors knew that the clam conditions wouldn't last – and, they didn't.

This tournament saw several shooters unveil new or modified equipment. Since the end of last season several competitors have either upgraded an existing rifle, purchased a new one or have upgraded other equipment such as wind flags and rests. As a result, some new names appear at the top of the scoreboard while other's scores improved along with the satisfaction factor.

Since these matches are mostly for friendly competition and building skills, the match format is somewhat flexible with both 50 and 100 yard stages possible and a mix of targets in use. At 50 yards the Sporter class shooters typically shoot at the IBS (Green) 50 yard target, although they can request the much harder RBA target. At 100 yards, the unlimited crowd typically shoot the tiny and unforgiving RBA target (with best edge scoring), but later this year the ARA target with worst edge scoring will be put into rotation.

This month it was decided to shoot three fifty yard cards with best edge scoring. Steve Gould, firing from a bipod requested a promotion to the Unlimited class and an RBA target, while Andy Greenspon shooting an MPR in Sporter Class chose to shoot at the RBA target but compete against in the Sporter class.

The first match was almost completely windless for its entire duration, which, as might be imagined, lead to some very good scores. Right out of the gate, Pat Patterson's new (to him) rifle proved itself to be a serious competitor by posting a clean 250-19X! During the offseason, Patterson had traded for the rifle and has been working with Grant Toman to get it in tune. With a Myers action a Broughton barrel, Harrel tuner, extra weight AND a bloop tube tuner, I would say "Mission accomplished"!

In second place was Match Director Simon Bailey, also employing a new rifle along but shooting from a two piece rest for the first time in his Benchrest career. Not quite as prepared as Patterson, Bailey finished attaching his scope during the practice session and fired from a SEB rest and rear bag since he didn't have time to adjust his usual one piece rest for the new rifle. The long awaited rifle – a 2500X with Muller barrel and all the fixin's showed promise, but Bailey only managed a 248-19X -at least the X count was competitive! Bill Parker also shot well, posting another 248 but with a slightly lower X-count at 13X.

In Sporter class, Drew McKay put his new Lithgow 101 to good use firing a 247-6X to edge out Joe Ettershank at 247-5X. Ettershank deployed his new wind flags and his trusty Anschutz 1727 which had recovered from a loose screw at the prone match the day before.

In the second match the winds started to make themselves known but didn't present a huge problem to the shooters. Accomplished unlimited shooter, Grant Toman, finally got his problem child rifle "Oops" shooting and posted a very strong 249-12X. "Oops", now wearing a well-worn Benchmark barrel and a new BR50 stock, still goes "oops" way too often with wide shots. Bill Parker continued to shoot well,

firing a 247-12X to edge out Patterson who posted a 247-10X. Bailey struggled, firing a 246-15X – a very nice X-count, but with too many dropped points.

In Sporter class, Ettershank was consistent, posting a second 247 this time with a 8X's, while McKay slipped back just a bit shooting a 244-5X.

With the sun strong the warming temperatures were very welcome - but sure to bring winds - and then the winds came! And brother did they come! Strong, switching, with rising and falling swirlies, a lot from the left but a predominant South wind. With wind directly from the field, the brow on MP-1 can cause some very strange effects. Normally with a strong tailwind you expect a slight rise in the impact. Unfortunately, the brow can cause a strange down draft that randomly pushes the shot low. You just never know which you're going to get – slightly high or WAY low – and it can bite you!

So started the third match. Patterson didn't really seem to notice the winds as he posted another 247, but with 12X. This final score propelled him into first Unlimited with a 744-41X. Parker also did well, firing a 246-8X to finish as second unlimited with a 741-33X. Toman and Bailey posted a pair of 245's with Toman ahead of Bailey by one point but Bailey taking high aggregate X count at 43X

In Sporter class Ettershank shot consistently despite the wind to fire a 246-6X to finish as first Sporter with a 740-19X

Congratulations to the winners and thanks to everyone for helping.

The next tournament will be held on April 28th on MP-1. I hope you will consider joining us for a match soon, it's a lot of fun and you don't need high dollar equipment to be competitive in the Sporter class.