

September 2018 Rimfire Benchrest Match Report Simon Bailey

Apparently, summer 2018 has decided not to leave even at the end of September with grey skies, high humidity, warm temperatures and variable winds greeting the final Rimfire Benchrest match of the season. The course of fire for the season ending match was four cards – two to be shot at 100 yards and two at 50 yards. All shooters used the IBS 200 yard target at 100 yards, but at 50 yards the Unlimited class fired at the RBA 50 yard target and the Sporter class fired at the green IBS 50 yard target.

After a short sight-in period, the first match got underway just as the wind made a noticeable but very brief appearance. As would be expected, with generally calm conditions, scores were very respectable – and close. Simon Bailey, returning his Hall/Shilen/Tenex combination to action, was on the way to a clean 250, until his 4th from last shot suffered a serious unexplained drop-out to leave him with a 249-3X. Pat Patterson, Hall/Shilen/Lapua, was only one point back (248-3X), trailed another point back by Bill Parker (247-4X) using his 2500/Shilen/Center-X rig. Joe Ettershank, absent last month, started out well in the Sporter class firing a 243-2X with his Anschutz 1727 firing RWS R-50.

In the second 100 yard match, there was a little more wind, but this did not stop Bill Parker from posting a clean 250-4X! Patterson and Bailey posted 247's with Bailey having 3X's to Patterson's 2X's – although Bailey suffered more from unexpected drop-outs than the wind. In the Sporter class Ettershank improved by one point to 244 with 4X's - an excellent X count.

The target frames were then moved back to 50 yards, just in time for an uptick in the winds which became variable – both in speed and direction. Consistent wind conditions became rare.

In the first 50 yard match, Bailey posed a 248-12X, dropping one point to a missed wind reversal and a second to a bad wind hold. Steve Gould, firing a Voodoo V22/Center-X combo firing in Unlimited class, shot a 245 to match Parkers 245. Ettershank continued to lead the Sporter class with a 246-6X, and Andy Greenspon using his MPR and RWS Special Match started to move up, posting a 242-3X.

The final 50 yard match was, well.....interesting. Bailey had a very poor start, dropping 5 points in 3 shots! After his first record shot went low and right, a sighter shot went exactly as aimed, giving confidence for the next shot. This confidence was misplaced, as the next shot defied the wind like it had a mind of its own, going high and right. Another sighter went exactly as aimed, followed by a third record shot that again went wild, but the opposite way – low and left – perhaps a thorough cleaning is in order! Giving up on sighters, Bailey's subsequent shots completely settled down with only one more point dropped in the match – Go Figure! Still, the disappointing 244-13X was sufficient to hold onto first place and overcome Patterson's final excellent effort of 248-12X. Parker, having a great match so far, suffered a bit in the wind with some "interesting" shots, to fire a final 243-9X. When the dust settled, only 3 points separated the top 3 Unlimited shooters.

In Sporter class, Greenspon made a late push by firing an outstanding 249-4X. Ettershank responded with a 245-7X, but with a substantial lead, Ettershank easily finished the match as first Sporter.

Congratulations to Unlimited class winner Bailey (988-31X) and Sporter class winner Ettershank (978-19X). Please see the Match Bulletin for the full results.

After the scores were tallied and the prize money awarded, Andy Greenspon used his true talent to provide an awesome end of season feast of Bar-B-Que and all the fixings, along with his famous Crab Cakes - much to the appreciation of all. What a great way to end the season – a good match and a full stomach!

The dates for the 2019 season will be posted on the calendar soon and I welcome everyone to join us in 2019 for the fun and challenge of Rimfire Benchrest!