

BEST TARGETS

BEST Targets Shooting Team After Action Report (AAR)

Event: Precision Rifle Series
Date: June 20-21, 2015
Location: Woody's Hunting & Rifle Club, New Hill, NC
Websites: www.precisionrifleseries.com
www.woodysmatch.com
Shooter: Scott Whitehead (w/Chris Andrews)
Rifle: Stiller Action / Brux Barrel / KRG X-Ray Chassis Rifle in 6.5 Creedmoor by Clowdis Precision
Ammo: Factory Hornady 140gr A-Max Ammo, Lot #3150433
Gear: Vortex PST 6-24x, TPS Rings, Harris BiPod w/ Kahntrol Pod-Mod Adapters, Wiebad Bags

Facility Notes

The Woody's Hunting & Rifle Club is a gorgeous and fast-growing facility. Recent additions, along with currently underway construction, promise to make this one of the nicest long-range competition facilities in the area.

Event Format

This was my first PRS event. I've shot quite a few long-range matches, but not a "real" PRS event. To further complicate things, my normal ammo loading partner was not available to help me this week, and I had to buy some Factory Hornady A-Max ammo just a few days before the match. The day before we left I was able to chrono it, and confirm dope out to 400 yards. Past that, my data relied solely on the JBM Ballistics calculator.

The match consisted of 12 stages shot from 6 positions. Each position had two stages, and it was clean, organized movement, which is important since some of that movement is across live-fire areas when they are hot. Taking the whole range cold so everyone can move safely takes some extra coordination, but they did it very well.

Chris and I started at Stage 7, HOUSE HIDE. This stage started at the bottom of a staircase inside a shoot house. At the buzzer, you had to climb the stairs, located a shooting position, build a position, locate a target, mil-range it, calculate a firing solution, and hit the target. The catch was a 90-second timer, making every part of the task feel pressured. When it was my turn to shoot, I climbed the stairs quickly, got comfortable in a prone position, and as soon as I got on the glass, I settled right on the target. I was able to mil it quickly at 1.2 mils, or just slightly under that. The tables on my armboard showed 880yds, so I dialed 6.9 mils and connected on the third shot after a few wind adjustments. This was a great start for me, and many more experienced shooters did not earn points on this stage. It also gave me a lot of confidence in the data I was using.

Stage 8 was called KNOW YOUR LIMITS. The stage started with five handgun targets in the woods, which were easily handled. After ditching the pistol, carry your rifle onto a rooftop and engage three targets. Any miss would end your stage and result in zero points – typical KYL scoring. When I moved to the rooftop and looked at where I *THOUGHT* the targets were, I saw nothing. I had never observed the targets with any magnification, and now I could not find them. What a sad "rookie move". After the R/O gently guided me left to another berm where the targets were, my unstable position and fractured mental game guaranteed a miss, and that's what I delivered. Many other shooters did not score points on this stage either, but this was not how I wanted to follow up my strong first stage.

Stage 9 was a speed stage called SWAMP ATTACK. At the buzzer, climb into a van, and shoot three targets downrange, twice each, in a specified order. Nothing to it. The targets were all just past 400 yards out, and they were BIG, so this was a confidence stage. The score was based on hits, but also on time, but I was not really thinking about time – I just wanted to clean this stage badly. Knowing my previous stage had been haunted by the familiar "not being able to find the target" issue, I spent a LOT of time before my turn finding the targets with binoculars. Crouching down next to the van while I was doing this kept me at the same elevation as the FFP (Final Firing Position), so I have the same view as I was going to have when I was shooting. As I heard people getting out of the van talking about how they could see the target standing with their binoculars but could not find them prone, I practiced finding them even more. When I jumped into the



van, I found all the targets quickly and ran the stage in 52 seconds. I was quite happy with this, but I know I could go much faster. As I was shooting, I kept my fundamentals almost too good for the size of the targets. I found myself staging each shot with proper breathing and trigger control, when the position was so stable I probably could have just pulled the trigger and still ran the stage 6 for 6. Sometimes, a little more speed is called for. Still, I was one of the faster shooters in our squad, and I was happy with my performance. Nearly every shooter cleaned this stage.

Stage 10, FORTIFIED OVERWATCH, started with pistol targets. After neutralizing the pistol targets, grab your rifle and move up the berm to engage 4 rifle targets – small 6" flashers at between 300 and 400 yards. Once again I practiced finding the targets as much as the R/Os would allow, and it paid off when I scaled the berm, found all four targets, and cleaned the stage.



Our fifth stage of the day, Stage 11, WORK THE WALL, was a standard barricade stage. Targets were at 100, 200, 300, 400 & 550 yards. Each had to be shot from a different position on the barricade and n position could be used more than once. I found five positions I could shoot from, put them in a logical order, with the most stable position last (for the farthest target), and was able to clean the stage. Shot calling here helped me a tremendous amount. Despite a strong performance on this stage, I still feel like I have a lot of room to grow on barricades. Also, I brought few extra bags to the line here, and had them when I needed them. I've never regretted bringing a bag to the line, and often regretting leaving one behind. That's an important lesson.

Stage 12, SIMULATED LOOPHOLE, had us shooting on the same range, shooting through a large loophole at three targets 200, 300, and 550 yards downrange. The loophole was quite large, and required no real compensation for height over bore other than making sure you were looking through the top half of the loophole. The position was laying down the backside of the berm which had a concrete pad at the top. I laid the Wiebad Todd Tac-Pac underneath my chest, and had the bipod on the concrete and it worked very well. I cleaned all three targets in significantly less than the time limit. I had cleaned four stages in a row, and was feeling very good about my performance.



Cycling back to Stage 1, WEDGED IN required a few pistol targets, followed by a run up the hill to an awkward 90 prone shooting position, and three targets you had to find, range, and shoot. With the pistol targets dispatched, I had trouble finding the targets, and when I found one, I was not sure if it was 6" or 8". I ranged it both ways, but was not able to get a hit, and zero'ed the stage. This was really disappointing to me – the premise of the stage was simple enough, but the time added stress, and finding the targets was the hardest part.

Stage 2, ADVANCE FORWARD was another low point. In this stage, there were four barrels that were shooting positions, all on the same flasher placed downrange. You had to start at the first barrel, hit the target, then move to the next target. I struggled at the first barrel and never connected. Worse yet, the reason.... Just before it was my turn to shoot, I decided to dial in some of the DOPE instead of holding all of it. What ended up happening was that I dialed some of it, and held all of it, ending up with far too much elevation, and I never saw the misses. A simple mental mistake was disastrous. Another zero stage score.

Stages 3 and 4 were shot on the same set of targets from 207yds to 315 yds, and brought out very different results. The first was BETWEEN THE GAPS – shooting off a wagon between blue barrels. This stage again went poorly, completing a string of three poor stages. After a few hits and the stage going well, a hit on the NO-SHOOT (-20 penalty) and then a miss on the briefly appearing pop-up (another 20pts lost) brought the stage down quickly. Stage 4, PINNED DOWN, used the same targets shot under a spool, and this stage went well.

The next to last stage of the day was Stage 5, ON THE RIVER, was shot off a floating platform. Shooting off the platform I quickly found that running the bolt disturbed the platform far more than shooting, as did dialing corrections on the scope. Targets ranged from 286yds, to an unknown distance target at about 475yds, and I was able to hit all but one of them in the 90 seconds.



The match ended in THE POLE DANCER, and it was great to end the match on a strong note. In this stage, we had to shoot off of a 45 degree 2x4 piece of lumber. This stage highlighted how much each of us had to learn from other shooters. One shooter had a clamp that nearly every shooter used to attach to the 2x4 and build a stable position from – and there is now one of them in my bag as well. I cleaned this stage with a very stable position, thanks to use of the clamp, my excellent Wiebad bags, and some good planning.

Things Done Well

Overall, I was very happy with my performance in my first PRS match. This match was very different than some of the matches we've shot recently. The targets were closer and larger, but the positions and other stressors replaced pure distance to make the match challenging. We shot alongside some VERY talented shooters, and learned a lot.

Results & Lessons Learned

I finished 49th out of 107 shooters. A few key shots could have greatly improved this, but there are a lot of take-aways from this match, including several things we know we need to work on in practice....

- Good data on your load is still king. I dodged a bullet here by being able to generate electronically good data from my chrono numbers, but good experience with your load is still the best option.
- Never "think" you know where the targets are. See every single target. Practice "seeing" your way through the stage, from target to target, and pay attention to the elevation of the FFP compared to your spotting elevation. Carry a way to locate and identify target with you, and make sure it's easily accessible, and easily stowable. Take it out and use it every change you get.
- Practice on barricades. Build a barricade. Even better.... Build a BEST TARGETS barricade!
- Have a clear stage plan and stick with it. Mentally rehearse the plan, and STICK WITH IT.
- Consistency will win matches. Even a few weak stages can move you WAY down in the standings in such a competitive field

Summary

We got to shoot with lots of friends, and make some new ones at this match, and BEST Targets got some exposure to some new shooters. Woody's Hunting and Rifle Club is a great host for this match, and I'm looking forward to going back in August for their next PRS match. With some experience and practice time, I hope to have an even stronger performance.

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