

# BEST TARGETS

## BEST Targets Shooting Team After Action Report (AAR)

**Event:** Guardian Long Range Competition  
**Date:** September 12, 2015  
**Location:** Woody's Hunting & Rifle Club, New Hill, NC  
**Websites:** <http://www.guardianlongrange.com/>  
[www.woodysmatch.com](http://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  
Custom Reloads, Berger 140gr Hybrids, Wolf LR-M Primers, 42.5gr H4350 Powder  
**Gear:** Vortex PST 6-24x, Harris BiPod w/ Kahntrol Pod-Mod Adapters, Wiebad Bags

### Event & Facility Notes

The Guardian Long Distance Competition is a charity match to support Bethany Christian Services. Bethany Christian Services is a global nonprofit family preservation and child welfare organization caring for orphans and vulnerable children on five continents. Bethany is recognized as a prominent leader in social services worldwide. The event is supported in a massive way by Ashbury Precision Ordnance (APO), one of the premier long-range rifle builders in the country.

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

The weather was overcast all day and threatened to rain, but it never did. Temperatures were in the 80s, very comfortable compared to our recent matches which approached 100 degrees. Winds ranged from still to 12mph full value winds.

The first stage we shot was called LAGOON OVERWATCH. In this stage, we started by running up the hill to a large plastic 36 inch conduit pipe. Three targets were downrange at 273, 293 and 405 yards. First you had to engage all three targets from within the conduit, then you needed to move to the top of the conduit and engage the three same targets again. I was the last shooter on the stage, which brought with it pluses and minuses. The downside was it was going to be



a little while before I got rid of my case of morning jitters. Watching a few shooters before me struggle in the pipe reminded me that you needed to be careful to not get too far into the pipe because it narrows your field of shooting. I just barely put my bipod in the pipe and was easily able to pan from side to side across all three targets. I hit all three targets on the first shot, moved to the top of the pipe, and shot all three targets on the first shot from there as well. My elevation DOPE on the first two targets was within 0.1 mils, so I dialed the elevation for the first two targets, held center on them, and then held up an additional correction for the third target. This allowed me to shoot the stage without ever touching my dials, but required me to be very aware of which target I was shooting at any given time. It was a strategy that worked well for many stages in this match. **A clean stage is a great way to start the day!**

The second stage of the match was called ADVANCE FORWARD. In this familiar Woody's stage, a single target is used downrange with five different shooting positions off blue barrels. Starting in front of the first barrel you connect with the target, then run to the next barrel and repeat the process. The five positions are at ranges of 337, 315, 305, 292, and 280 yards. The target at this match was significantly smaller than it had been at the previous matches but without the pistol shots beforehand. I chose a shorter Accuracy International AW magazine, because in previous runs my normal longer AICS magazines had contacted the barrel and I used a Wiebad Tac-Pad on the front of my rifle. I debated replacing the bipod after installing the Tac-Pad but I decided to leave the bipod off for weight. As I moved from barrel to barrel,



using a reverse kneeling position and a Wiebad Pump-Pillow on my right arm, **my Tac-Pad slowly slid off the rifle, with no bipod to hold it in place.** I almost put a round right through it on the 3<sup>rd</sup> barrel! The use of the front bag was far more stable than other positions I've tried from the top of these barrels and the shorter AW mags helped with clearance, but using a bipod (or something else) to keep the front bag in place is a necessity. In the midst of resolving the issue, I started to feel a little time pressure and at just the right time Chris called out to me "over 45 seconds remaining" - that was a hugely calming thing to hear. I knew I was still on track with time and not to rush my remaining shots. That one sentence really helped me. For this stage as well, I dialed for one target (in this case the last one) and held over for the first few to compensate. I cleaned this stage despite the delay of having to adjust my front bag several times.



The third stage, **BEHIND THE WALL**, and the fourth stage, **ON THE WATER**, were shot on the same set of targets ranging from 231 to 311 yards. These targets were almost all 6" flasher targets – with one hidden behind a LaRue faller and one partially obscured a hostage target. **BEHIND THE WALL** was shot from behind a multi-step barricade and all the shots could be taken from a single position on the wall – there was no need to change positions during the stage. I chose a low position and had intended to sit, but shot it from a very low kneel/crouch. I dialed a single elevation which would cover the first three targets then held an additional ½ mil that would put me on the last two. I cleaned all the targets but somehow managed to break a terrible shot and hit the hostage target as well costing me several points.

For the **ON THE WATER** stage we shot the same targets from a floating platform suspended from chains. The last time I shot from this platform I easily cleaned the stage I was shooting but this time the platform seemed to have a LOT more movement - including some left to right movement which I've never had a problem with before on this platform. (Several other shooters noticed this extra movement as well.) I left one target and again hit the no-shoot. **No-Shoot targets continue to be a mental weakness in my game – I need to practice with more no-shoots so I get more used to seeing them without altering my shooting.**



The fifth stage, **IN MOM'S VAN**, was possibly the most stable position of the entire match. After a quick 40 yard run you had to enter a van with a lush 80s interior (with the seats removed) and shoot out of the rear door. The obvious choice was a prone position and with the exception of a few brackets sticking into your stomach and some holes in the floor, the position was nearly ideal. 6 inch and 8 inch flashers ranged from 312 yards to 444 yards and in such a good position the only challenge here really was wind. Although there was right to left wind at the shooting position I saw a little left to right downrange and ended up cleaning the stage holding dead center on all targets. I dialed this stage using a single dope for the first three targets and dialed in an additional 1 mil for the last two. I had intended to hold over for the last two

targets but with the position being so stable and since I had plenty of time, I decided to dial instead.

The sixth stage, **THE POLE**, was another familiar Woody's Hunting & Rifle Club stage and I came prepared. Two 2x4s were mounted at 45 degree angles to shoot off of and I had brought a small clamp for just such an occasion. Of course, no one else in the group had a clamp so nearly every shooter in our group borrowed it! I shot this stage from a sitting position, at the same targets as the previous stage, with a Pump-Pillow on my right arm and Tac-Pad on the front of my rifle. Having learned my lesson, I replaced the bipod on the gun to make sure the Tac-Pad would not walk. **I also brought another bag to the line (which I almost left behind), but it turned out to be a critical link – I put it between my right knee and my left foot, to give me even more elevation for the last two shots.** I should have cleaned this stage but I left the very last target because I was rushing the shot. Had I had someone giving me times on a stop-watch I likely would have slowed down and made the shot, but instead I rushed several poor shots instead of making one good one, and you can't miss fast enough to win in this match! **Having a coach / timekeeper always helps!**



The next stage of the match was **IN THE VALLEY**. Shooting off a spool, the shooter had to engage targets from 269 yards to 597 yards, all without touching any dials on their scopes. Since the middle three targets in the stage were about the same distance, I dialed for those, held under for the early short-distance targets, and was prepared to hold-over for the final long-distance target. The wind was really whipping across the grass here, much more so in the valley between the shooter and the targets. I hit the early targets with somewhere around ½ mil of left hold (left to right wind) and connected with the final target holding 1¼ mils left and 1 mil over. **The Vortex Optics EBR-2c Reticle really shined here on my Vortex PST scope.** Having to simultaneously hold wind and elevation would have been really tough without a good grid to work from.

Although I didn't shoot this last chronologically, the last stage of the match was KNOW YOUR LIMITS and it was the stage that cost me the match. Shooting from the bed of a pick-up truck with the rifle on the cab was a very stable position and there was plenty of room for a rear bag and a fully-supported rifle. The targets at 597 yards – a 10", 8", and 6" target. After connecting with the first two shots, nearly dead center according to a spotter, I missed the third shot. I simple broke the shot far too early. I was too interested in making the shot and I lost my sense of pace and process. I sent the shot nearly a full mil high according to onlookers. In a stage where you have time, it's important to respect the process gets you success. Instead of concentrating on breathing, trigger press, and calling my shot, I simply saw an acceptable sight picture and pulled (yanked?) the trigger. This one shot was a 130 points swing (I lost 50 points from my previous two hits, as well as the 80 points the third target was worth) and that would have put me 3<sup>rd</sup> in the match. One shot. Ahh... the frustration. **ALWAYS RESPECT THE FUNDAMENTALS.**

## Things Done Well

I shot a very good, solid, match. A single miss on the KYL stage kept me out of the top-3, but that's how things go sometimes. I made some mental mistakes and generally did a good job overcoming or minimizing their impacts. My barricade performances have improved in the past few months thanks to some preparation and training.

I ran through 4 different lots of ammunition at this match. I was in the middle of transitioning between loads, and this match was my chance to finish several old lots and move on to my new load. This made the data a little confusing and was something that had an opportunity to cause some issues but I worked it out. I never had a data issue all weekend.

## Results & Lessons Learned

I finished 10<sup>th</sup> out of 80 shooters. There are several things I should take away from this match...

- A clean stage is a great way to start the match!
- When shooting with a "nose" bag, keep the bipod (or something else) on to keep the bag from sliding forward, and either ruining your position or even getting in the way of your muzzle.
- No-Shoot targets continue to be a mental weakness in my game – I need to practice with more no-shoots so I get more used to seeing them without altering my shooting.
- Practice positional shooting and come to the line prepared to make small adjustments which will help me be successful. It's easy to bring an extra bag to the line and throw it down at the shooting position just in case you need it to add a slight amount of support or elevation.
- Having a coach/timekeeper always helps! My shooting partner, Chris, excels at this.
- The EBR-2C reticle on my Vortex Viper PST 6-24x scope was massively helpful when I needed to hold both wind and elevation on the same shot. I might have been the only person on my squad who was able to make this challenging shot and without this reticle it would have been nearly impossible.
- ALWAYS RESPECT THE FUNDAMENTALS. A shot that seems "easy" is often the most easily missed. And when that shot is the highest point value in the entire match it's going to hurt your standings - a lot.

## People & Notes

We shot this match with some cool people including civilians, veterans and a pair of Snipers from a local SWAT team. Our squad included trainers and well-known personalities from the shooting world. John and Sarah McQuay of [www.8541tactical.com](http://www.8541tactical.com) made sharing a hobby look like a great thing for a relationship. Garrett Mallekoote from MuzzleBrake Media [www.facebook.com/MuzzleBrakeMedia](http://www.facebook.com/MuzzleBrakeMedia) took great pictures of the event. (Photo credits all go to him.)

BEST Targets, Advanced Spinal Fitness, Kahntrol Solutions, Volquartsen Custom, Mechanix Wear and Vortex Optics all got some great visibility over the weekend. I was especially honored to be able to give away the BEST TARGETS trophies to the top finishers in each class and overall. All these sponsors love supporting the shooting sports and Bethany Christian Services and we enjoy working with and shooting with everyone from Ashbury Precision Ordnance (APO).

## Summary

The Guardian matches are always fantastic matches, made even better by a great organizer (Gary Larson), and some great match directors (Damon Woodall and Dave Branson). Woody's is one of our favorite places to shoot, and we look forward to coming back for the Precision Rifle Series "Fall Brawl".

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