

BEST TARGETS

BEST Targets Shooting Team After Action Report (AAR)

Event: 2019 Allegheny Sniper Challenge
Date: October 5-6, 2019
Location: Seneca Rocks, West Virginia
Websites: <https://www.ascmatch.com/>

Shooter: Chris Andrews
Rifle: GA Precision GAP-10 chambered in 6.0mm Creedmoor
Ammo: Remington / Barnes Match Ammo 112 gr Barnes Matchburner
Gear: Vortex Razor AMG 6-24x, Aadland Engineering 20 MOA mount, Kahntrol Solutions muzzle brake, Harris Bipod w/ Kahntrol Solutions Pod-Mod Adapters, Hawk Hill Custom Spiked Feet & Reasor Precision bags.

Shooter: Scott Whitehead
Rifle: Kelbly's Atlas Tactical Action, Hawk Hill Barrel, KRG Whiskey-3 chassis.
Rifle chambered in 7mm Practical, built by Southern Indiana Precision (SIP)
Ammo: 7mm Practical Handloads. Berger 184 F-Open Hybrids, 72.5gr H1000, Wolf LR-M primers, Lot #R1b
Gear: Vortex Razor Gen II 4.5-27x, Vortex Precision Rings, Ckye-Pod, Cole-Tac and Reasor Precision bags.
Vortex Fury 5000 Rangefinder, Feisol Tripod, Rock Solid Shooting Solutions (RS3) rifle cover.

Facility Notes

The Allegheny Sniper Challenge is held on private land located in Seneca Rocks, West Virginia. It is located right along the Eastern Continental divide, in the midst of some of the most beautiful mountain ranges in North America. Because this event is held on private land, it is not available for events at any other time of the year.

Event Format

The Allegheny Sniper Challenge is a match with a 20-year history, and is unlike any other. This event was a "pairs" match – which allowed each ASC veteran on the roster (Scott Whitehead) to bring along an ASC rookie (Chris Andrews) to shoot the match. The shooters would be scored as individuals however.

Shooters were divided into two squads, with each squad shooting half of the course of fire each day. The squads move up and down the mountain, completing stages as they go. The two days of shooting are separated by a legendary prime rib dinner served by Rod and John, the hosts of the match. Targets ranged from 20 yards to 1220 yards, included shots across valleys, up and down steep angles, positional shooting, synchronized fire exercises, and improvised positions.

The match is scored very differently as well. Each shooter keeps their own scorecard, and accrues a point for each miss, with a perfect scoring being zero. At this particular ASC, there was no prize table, and that suited this match just fine. The ASC is an invitation-only match which is geared toward an outstanding shooting experience in some of the most amazing scenery you can imagine – not a competitive environment like a PRS match where each shooter strives for individual glory.

Background

Scott and Chris arrived at ASC this year under very different circumstances. For Chris, this was his first ASC event, and he would be shooting his tried-and-true GAP-10 in 6CM, which had served him well since Mammoth 2015. Scott, on the other hand, has one ASC under his belt, and finished top-5 in Spring of 2018, and was returning to ASC with a new challenge – a nearly brand-new 7mm Practical rifle built through the prize table generosity of Kelbly's Rifles, Hawk Hill Barrels, and Southern Indiana Precision. The new rifle, with less than 100 rounds down the barrel, would get it's first field shake-down at ASC – a risk most people would not take at most matches, but was perfectly suited for ASC.

The evening before the first day, we had a brief shooters meeting and registration. Rod and John spoke about safety, the match and the facility, and how the event would flow. It was great to see lots of experienced ASC shooters, and lots of shooters who were new to the event.

DAY 1

Day 1 started with a truck ride up to the highest peak, and we worked our way back down the mountain, shooting the "Narrowly Divided" half of the match. Day 1 consisted of 35 total targets, highlighted by the following engagements:

"Heart of Darkness" was a 2/3 IPSC at 1012 yards, across a valley and in a very dark hole in the foliage. Shooters had to shoot from the edge of the ridge, at a downward angle to engage the plate. Winds were coming up over the ridge fast, and the shooters had three rounds to score 1 hit on this target, with missed impacts almost impossible to spot in the dark hole. Chris hit this target on his third shot, chasing the wind. Scott, who started struggling with elevation data on the very first targets of the day, missed this target with all three shots.



We engaged a number of targets from 800 to 1000 yards along each side as we crossed the ridge, and then turned around and shot back up the ridge. Two stages, "Top of the Ridge" and "West Side Story" involved our closest prone targets of the match – at 350 and 382 yards. On this stage, Chris scored second round hits on both targets after correcting for the big wind rolling over the ridge. Scott continued to science out his elevation issues, taking one sighter shot on each one, and then connecting on both targets on the second shot after making a correction.

The final 12 targets of the day were all engaged from one position, a ridgeline overlooking the farm. Shooters took turns shooting 9 stages, which ranged from "Spinal Tap" at 368 yards, out to "Easy Day", which included a 2/3 IPSC and a popper target at 1220 yards. The picture below shows the amazing scenery of ASC. Chris' highlights from this area included a first-round impact on the 1092

yard "Silo" target, and an impact holding over 3.0 mils of wind at 1220 yard on the larger "Easy Day" target. Scott was still struggling with data at this point, and racked up a bunch more misses as he "shot & corrected" on most targets, scoring only one first-round hit here on the 665 yard "Corner Pocket" target.



At the end of the official shooting on Day 1, we headed to a make-shift zero range to figure out what was going on with Scott's rifle. Three rounds on a zero target that were far high and right were the first indicator of a problem, but the root cause was a second barrel speed-up due to break-in. A day before, this load was shooting just over 3050fps, and now it was 3095. A turret adjustment to correct zero and a thorough data re-work and fresh data cards were needed for Day 2.

DAY 2

Sunday morning started with five stages shot from inside the perimeter of the lower farm area, followed by a move up to another location high on the mountain where we worked our way back down, engaging targets on our way back down. Highlights of Day 2 included:



The first four stages were all cross-canyon type shots, and Scott's new data was delivering perfectly. Through the first four stages, he had no misses, and his elevation data looked perfect.

The fifth stage of the day was "Into the Wind". The shooter had to engage and hit an 8" popper at 580 yards from an improvised log position. After registering a hit, the shooter had to drop his rifle, and engage three diamond targets prone using a SCAR-based MK20 SSR rifle provided by FN for the match. Chris hit the popper on this second shot. Scott hit this on his first shot, and completed the timed stage in 20.9 seconds – among the fastest times of the match.

"Narrowback" required the shooters to work within a rocky area to find a shooting position up to an adjacent ridgeline 775 "corrected" yards away. Like nearly every target in this match, inclination and declination angles, which ranged from 10° to nearly 30°, required a cosine range correction to get proper elevation data. (All the ranges in this AAR are "corrected" distances). A nice change from Day 1's nearly 20mph winds, Day 2's calmer winds helped both Scott and Chris score a first-round hit on this target, and they both walked away with zero "points" from this stage.



Many stages of the match had strict gear restrictions, some disallowing bags, bipods, tripods, or various other gear, requiring the shooters to shoot very specific combinations of hardware. Some stages had off-hand shooting which required no gear, or a shooting-sticks stage where shooters had to use the supplied shooting sticks only. "Top Floor" however was a no-gear-restrictions stage, shooting at nearly 30° upward angle at a mini-IPSC at 465 yards. Both Chris and Scott made use of a Feisol tripod with ARCA mount for stage. The ARCA rail on Scott's KRG Whiskey-3 chassis made it easy to clip into the tripod, and quickly build a stable position. This was another stage where both Scott and Chris scored first-round hits, just as the rain started moving in.

The final stage of the day was "LFT", for "Last F***ing Target". With the rain making for very wet conditions, shooters had to again build a position to shoot a high upward angle torso target. At this point in the match, many shooters were having trouble with fogging glass, but our Vortex Razors were crystal clear. Using the adjustable Ckye-pod bipod, Chris and Scott came away from this stage with first-round hits and zero points.

At the end of Day 2, Chris had managed to score only 14 points, a significant improvement over his Day 1 hit percentage. Scott had completely turned around his scoring performance. After scoring 52 (!!) points on Day 1 while fighting his data issues, Scott came away with only 4 points on Day 2, coming very close to a clean day in "The Hollow" half of the match.



Things Done Well

Thanks to field experience from matches like the Mammoth Sniper Challenge, both Scott and Chris were very familiar with the field gear needed to be successful in a match like this, and that experience paid off in conditions ranging from 40° with 20mph winds, all the way to 70° with medium steamy rain. Our rifles ran well all day, our Vortex scopes and LRF were flawless, all our gear held up beautifully, and we had everything we needed to meet the challenge of each stage.

Chris showed up with a very capable and well-proven weapons system, and it ran smoothly all weekend. His data was precise, and the gun delivered over and over again. Scott's rifle definitely delivered a curve ball during Day 1, as a second "speed up" of muzzle velocity required some adjustment. But Scott and Chris worked together to get back on track, and on Day 2, the new 7mm rifle was absolutely hammering all day long.

Although not specifically a "team" match, ASC encourages spotting and coaching between shooters. Scott and Chris drew from their extensive experience working together, and both helped each other and coached each other, exchanging information about conditions, wind, and impacts. In this situation, an effective team is far better than two individuals.

Results & Lessons Learned

At the time of this writing, the final results of the match have not been released, but this match is not about finishing positions or prize-tables.

In Chris' first trip to ASC, he learned a lot about wind calls and wind holds. Chris is going to keep working on getting more first-round hits, and not relying on first-round spotting to make a correction. He is also going to work on his seated and standing off-hand shooting.

In Scott's sophomore effort on the mountain, Scott was proud of his recovery on the second day after what was a very tough Day 1. He arrived at the match with a rifle that had never shot more than 100 yards, and by Day 2, had first-round hits on nearly target out to 1050 yards in some challenging conditions. Scott really reinforced the idea that, with a good zero, and a good velocity, you can generate good data and have a successful match, as he did on Day 2.

Summary

The Alleghany Sniper Challenge is a unique opportunity to shoot in some of the most beautiful terrain around, at challenging distances, angles, and wind conditions. If you have the opportunity to go, don't pass it up.



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