

BEST TARGETS

BEST Targets Shooting Team After Action Report (AAR)

Event: Precision Rifle Series Woody's Fall Brawl
Date: November 21-22, 2015
Location: Woody's Hunting & Rifle Club, New Hill, NC
Websites: www.precisionrifleseries.com
www.woodysmatch.com
Shooter: Scott Whitehead
Rifle: Stiller Action / Brux Barrel / KRG X-Ray Chassis Rifle in 6.5 Creedmoor by Clowdis Precision
Ammo: 6.5 Creedmoor Handloads. Berger 140 Hybrids, 42.5gr H4350, Lot R7c
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 already one of the nicest long-range facilities in the Southeast. We've been spending a lot of time there lately and every time we go we notice new construction and more to be excited about. If you live in this corner of the country you owe it to yourself to shoot at match there.

Event Format

This was my first PRS event of the 2016 season and this year I'm determined to break into the Top-100 national rankings. I've been looking forward to this match for a while now, since it's my first chance to build momentum.

Woody's matches always include a few hours the day before to register and check your zero if you're inclined and I never miss the chance. I chrono'd my current batch of ammo and also tested another batch I'm about to load up which will include a new lot of powder. I found out the hard way how much different two lot numbers of the same powder can be. Zero day is always a good chance to see friends and chat and Jeremy from Kahntrol Solutions was there demonstrating their muzzle brakes on some BEST TARGETS steel

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 Woody's always runs a smooth match.

One of the improvements that the PRS series has made in 2016 is their addition of "PRS Skill's Stages" to all matches. These stages are the equivalent of a Classifier in USPSA – a completely standardized stage that everyone across the country shoots the same way and gets scored on the same way. This gives the series a way to rank shooters' performance no matter where they live or what matches they are able to attend.

Stage 11 & 12 were these standardized stages and as with anything new there were a few kinks to work out. We needed to modify the stages just slightly from the original stage briefs to make sure they met the letter of the law and so that we were shooting them as intended. Woody and his ROs did an awesome job of communicating and resolving the issues FAST and we got to shooting.



Stage 12 - PRS Skills Stage, Barricade

Stage 11 was a three target array at 400yds shot from a prone inside a white van. These were large targets from a very stable position, and nearly everyone cleaned this stage. It was, however, a chance to put up a great time (used only as a tie-breaker) and lots of guys took the opportunity to do this. Three targets downrange needed to each be hit twice, in A-B-C-C-B-A order. It was a perfect way to start the match and I shot it clean in about 34 seconds but that was far from the fastest time. I was still one of the faster guys and I had built up some confidence. I also knocked off some cobwebs with my 6 shots – 6 hits performance. A good start to the day.

Stage 12 was also a PRS Skills Stage. In this stage four positions were marked on a barricade and from each position you had to shoot two shots at a single 10" target 400 yards downrange. As solid as the barricade was, this was a tough stage. The

lower position was a solid weak-side kneel while the upper position was an awkward height in-between a high kneel and standing. (I've struggled at this height before most recently at the recent FrontlineDefense Pallet stage.) I scored 4 hits in my 8 shots at this stage which was actually a pretty solid score, but I knew I needed to improve this aspect of my shooting.

Our squad moved next to Stage 1 – LAGOON OVERWATCH. After a brief run up a hill you had 90 seconds in this stage to build a position on top of a culvert pipe and engage six targets of known distance. I have a little practice on this pipe and built a position quickly – moving the bipod as far forward as possible and using my rear bag for support at the rear of the gun. I cleaned the six targets in eight shots with two misses while I was muscling gun from sliding sideways on the pipe. I dialed for the closest target putting all the other targets on even ½ mil increments and I held from there.



Stage 1 - Lagoon Overwatch



Stage 2 - Advance Forward, Barrel Sideways & Upright

Stage 2 – ADVANCE FORWARD was a well-known stage at Woody's. It starts with engaging several pistol targets and then moving to several barrels to be used as shooting positions. A single target downrange had to be engaged from each barrel. Some barrels were upright and some were laying down in constantly alternating positions with a short run in between each. Using an AW magazine for clearance, I put my Wiebad Todd Tac-Pad on the front of the gun and put my Wiebad Pump Pillow on my 215 Gear tether for the high kneeling positions. I was

able to get a very stable position on each barrel with a high and low kneel and had no problem cleaning this stage.

Moving back toward the main building, our next stage was Stage 3 – BEHIND THE WALL. In this stage you had a confined shooting box to shoot from using a wall for cover which resulted in a near 90 degree prone position. Maybe it's because I tend to shoot without a perfectly parallel spine to start with but I found this position plenty comfortable enough to easily engage the 6 targets, ranging from 211yds to 309yds, for another clean stage.

Stage 4 – ON THE WATER, was shot at the same target array as Stage 3 but from the Woody's "Boat Simulator" - a platform on chains that seems to move randomly and without mercy. In reality the platform can be calmed down a bit by smart movement and balance but it makes for tough shots on otherwise easy targets. I was able to connect with 4 of the 6 targets but the floating platform was not kind to me.



Stage 3 - Behind the Wall

Stage 5 – ON THE STAIRS, was the definition of mental mistake for me. I prepared for the stage like I always do, writing down my holds, checking all my turrets, setting the parallax, etc. The stairs we had to shoot off of, to engage the targets from 230yds to 442yds, were available for a while and I even had a chance to "walk through" the positions (without my rifle) to make sure I was comfortable. Squad discussion was around the switching winds and I watched guys hit the targets by holding off the left edge and holding off the right edge. I listened over and over to talk about the wind. When I



Stage 5 - On the Stairs

got to the line I found an excellent stable low position for the first shots and I held my best guess for wind. Nothing. No sign of trace or splash. I took another guess and still nothing. I thought about what other wind options I had while I moved to the second position and two took more shots – nothing. Nothing at all. Then it occurred to me – I had been so wrapped up in thinking about the wind my process had gone right out the window and I had forgotten to hold elevation. WTF! Now my mistake was in my head and it was all I could think about. I had wasted time with my misses and I could not recover. I ended up hitting one target of the six and lost far too many points on this stage.



Stage 6 - Boardwalk (Lynn Houck)

Following my disastrous performance on the stairs, Stage 6 – BOARD WALK, was my opportunity to get my focus back. Shooting the same 6 targets as the previous stage the targets needed to be engaged from the top of a 2x8 board mounted sideways to a telephone pole. Getting a firm perch on the board was difficult but using my support hand to push the rifle into the telephone pole for side support proved very helpful. I didn't get nearly as stable as I would have liked but I concentrated on a smooth trigger squeeze and making the best of the stability that I had. I was able to hit every one of the 6 targets on this stage. I worked really hard to get my head in the right place going into this stage and it paid off. Recovering from a bad stage is a tough thing to do but it's critical in matches where nearly everyone has at least one.

On Sunday morning our squad headed to the Woody's shoot house - a two-story building that has numerous shooting uses. Stage 7 – HOUSE HIDE #1 required the shooter to use a pistol to hit several pieces of steel from the first story before climbing the stairs and building a precision rifle position on the second story. Sunday was much windier than Saturday and all the shooters on Sunday fought the wind during these longer-range stages. Once you built a position you had 5 shots to engage a 775yd target passing through at least three different winds on the way there. I was able to contact the plate twice, scoring 40 points, as I chased the changing winds. That was a decent performance in my squad but numerous guys in Saturday squads cleaned this stage.

Stage 8 – HOUSE HIDE #2 used the same shooting position to engage five targets at 225, 331, 658, 740 and 775yds. With a little experience in these winds I hit the first two targets holding dead center and hit the next three favoring toward the left edge (but not off the target). Cleaning this stage was a highlight for me because some VERY talented shooters struggled on this stage. I'm sure part of the success was a little luck with a consistent wind during my turn. That same consistent wind would have made a huge difference on the first House Hide stage but it was still confidence inspiring.

The second to the last stage of the match for us was Stage 9 – KNOW YOUR LIMITS. The shooting position was off the roof of a truck at a rack with a 10", 8", and 6" gongs placed 597yds down range. This KYL stage is infamous among competitors. A clearing about 500yds away from the shooters on the right side of the tree line lets in a nasty crosswind that is unpredictable and unreadable. Several shooters with a rangefinder said the range was more like 580yds so I dialed a 580yd DOPE, put 0.1 Left on the gun and held dead center. The shooting position was dead stable on the roof, nearly as stable as prone, and the shooters' wind call determined their hit or miss. After breaking the shot the roof was so flimsy that the sheet metal bounced and "oil-canned" badly taking the gun off target. According to spotters my shot went off the edge at 7 o'clock. Nearly every other shooter in my squad got a zero on this stage as well.

The final stage of the day was Stage 10 – TWISTED KNOW YOUR LIMITS. This might have been the most fun stage of the day for me. According to the stage description the shooter had to go prone, shoot at the 10" KYL target then stand and hit a torso at 185 yards. Once that was complete, the shooter had to lay back down and hit the 8" KYL target then stand and hit the torso again ... then shoot the 6" KYL target from prone and stand and hit the torso one more time. One catch here was the definition of "standing". According to the ROs standing was any position where the only thing touching the ground was the shooters feet. This left a low crouch as a valid shooting position which, in addition to being a lot more stable, was a *LOT* faster to transition back and forth to from prone. I found this crouch to be very stable as long as I had both heels firmly on the ground and as long as I had good contact between my calves and my hamstrings. I crouched like this and found transitions VERY fast, but some other shooters, like Patrick Law from Accuracy International, shot a more traditional rifleman's standing. I dialed my 597 yard DOPE and held *UNDER* for the torso shots. (In hindsight, I might do the opposite next time). My only miss on this stage was my first shot at the torso where I forgot my hold-under but other than that I went six-for-six. Another clean stage and a very high point in the match for me.



Stage 10 – Twisted Know Your Limits – Both prone and "standing" shots.

Things Done Well

With a very few exceptions I felt very good about my performance in this match. My mental game was generally very good with one notable exception. My data on the gun was good and my hand-loaded ammo has been more than consistent enough for these matches. My equipment has been proven out pretty well and what little practice time I've been able to dedicate has been helpful.

Results & Lessons Learned

I finished 18th out of 98 shooters. A few takeaways:

- Practice on barricades. Build a barricade. Even better.... build a BEST TARGETS barricade! (I'm digging this out from a previous AAR, but it's still relevant. My barricade performance could use a lot of work. It's never going to feel like prone but it should be something I approach with more confidence).
- Keep working on the mental game. Stage "short-circuits" are something that are preventable. I need to be a little less distracted and improve my focus before I shoot.
- Wind calling is still a weakness of mine. I need to practice it more.

Summary

What a great match! Woody and Dave Branson put on a great event and I'm off to a good start in my 2016 quest to be top-100 in the country. I'm looking forward to the December – January stretch of matches, with some great cold-weather shooting, and getting back to what got me into this sport in the first place – the Mammoth Sniper Challenge.

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