

BEST TARGETS

BEST Targets Shooting Team After Action Report (AAR)

Event: Precision Rifle Series
Date: August 14-16, 2015
Location: K&M Precision Rifle Training Center, Finger, TN
Websites: www.precisionrifleseries.com
www.kmprecisionrifletraining.com

Shooter: Scott Whitehead (w/Mike & Eyan Bowers)
Rifle: Stiller Action / Brux Barrel / KRG X-Ray Chassis Rifle in 6.5 Creedmoor by Clowdis Precision
Ammo: Custom Reloads, Lot #7a, 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

Facility Notes

K&M Precision Rifle Training Center is a brand-new facility, and this was the first major competition held here. The facility, although smaller in acreage than many other facilities we shoot at, lacks nothing in distance or shooting props. The facility was absolutely gorgeous, and offered a tremendous amount of different shooting challenges.

Equipment Notes

Most of the gear I used was my typical match gear. The only new addition was ammo that I had loaded myself. Most of the ammo I've used in the past has been either Factory Hornady 140 A-Max or ammo I've loaded with the help of John Friguglietti, but this ammo was loaded start to finish by me on my own equipment. I had chrono'ed 10 rounds of it, but had no other data on this ammo.

Event Format

Thanks to owner and match director Shannon Kay, the event ran nearly flawlessly despite a very large group of shooters. Squads of shooters moved from position to position, with each of the 11 positions hosting two stages. Every stage of the match had the same 90sec stage limit.

We arrived the afternoon before the event and had a chance to check my 100yd zero. I first checked the zero with the Hornady factory ammo I had been shooting before, and it was spot on. Then I changed over to my own ammo, and it was again spot on. I never touched a dial, and was confident going into the match, but still had some concern about my DOPE.

We started at Stage 9, TEST YOUR LIMITS. At 515 yards and shooting from prone, a rack of targets ranged from 12" to 4". This was a modified Know Your Limits, except that you could start the rack again if you missed, as long as you were within a 10rd stage limit. I shot this stage clean, with 5 hits in 5 shots in 26.68sec, and was very happy with my performance. It was a great way to start the match.

Stage 10, HUSTLE DRILL, was a mix of static targets and a mover, estimated at 2.5mph. Static targets ranged from 324yds to 510yds, with the mover at 500yds. In the stage plan, you had to take 5 shots at the mover, engage the three static targets until you hit all three, and then re-engage the mover with up to 5 rounds (whatever remained of the 13 stage rounds). I took 5 shots at the mover with 3 hits, hit all three static targets using hold-unders, and then shot 5 more at the mover. I had scored 6 hits on the mover, but the RO only recorded 5.



Stage 11, POLES, was a series of telephone poles sunk into the ground to various heights from about 18" to about 42". At the 5 poles, shoot 2 shots from on top of each pole at a single target 310yds away. The poles were very rigid, and worked well with the Str8 Precision Bag under the forearm of the chassis. This stage required various sitting and kneeling heights, something that I know I need to work more on. I borrowed a Wiebad Pump Pillow to complement my current bags, and scored 8 hits out of 10 shots.

Stage 12, SPEED RACK started with 5 shots prone from a 6mm Creedmoor GA Precision stage gun. Then you had to move to another prone position and load your gun – either single feed or load your magazine on the clock – and shoot 10 shots. The shots were taken at a rack of 5 targets at 600yds. I scored 3 hits with the stage gun, and 4 hits with my own gun out of 6 shots I was able to get off under the time limit. I elected to use Hornady Factory ammo for this stage, because the shorter length loads more easily. I also used the AW magazines, which run less reliably in my gun, but are quicker to load. Overall, I felt like I broke a few shots too early, and probably would have scored more points if I had respected each shot more.



At this point we cycled back to the beginning of the 12 stages to be shot on Day #1. Stage 1, POINT TARGET, included 8 shots on a single 700yd target. Two shots were taken from the top of a large tire implanted into the ground, then two more shots prone, then two more from on top of the tire, then two more prone. This meant you had to build positions and move from position to position quickly. I was able to clean this stage, with 8 hits well under the time limit.

Stage 2, IPSC PROGRESSION was a row of IPSC targets at 900yds. Shooters had to start at the 100% IPSC (1 pt), and if they hit it, they could move to the 66% IPSC (2 pts) and with a hit, shooters could move to the 45% IPSC (3 pts). Any miss meant you kept your points, but had to move back to the first target. I was able to hit the first target 4 times, and the second one twice, for 8 points. I was frustrated with some of my misses here, but struggled with getting a good wind call.

Stage 3, STRETCH was targets at 1000yds, 1100yds, and 1200yds. Within the 90 second time limit, take 3 shots at each target. At this point in the day, the mirage was bad but not impossible, and popular wisdom was that the mirage tends to push you low on this range. I added 0.2 mils to my elevation, and took three shots at the first target without much of a wind call. On the third shot, I saw a miss to the left, and at least I had a wind call. Going to the 1100yd targets, I dialed my second DOPE and held 0.75 mils Right, and hit two out of three targets. I was excited I had a wind call that worked and was feeling good, and moved to the third target increasing my wind hold to 1.0 mils. After three misses I never saw, I was feeling frustrated at the unexplained misses, until I realized I had never dialed my 1200yd DOPE, and likely put the shots well short of the 1200yd target with my 1100yd DOPE still on the gun. It was the first of several mental mistakes that would cost me points during this match.

Stage 4, RIDE ALONG GONE BAD put three poppers downrange, and all three had to be shot from three different positions. First off the hood of a police car, then from inside the police car, then from the trunk of the police car. The shots were not particularly tough, but I rushed the shots from the hood, wasted too much time with the very difficult unsupported shots from the inside of the car, and then rushed again when I got the trunk. A better approach to the stage might have been to concentrate on the 6 shots I could get (from the hood and trunk) and not waste time from the inside of the car. (This lesson paid off later in the match). I only scored one hit in this stage.



Stage 5, HOODLUMS ON THE STREET required shooting 6 headshots in and around three vehicles at ranges from 400 to 500 yds, and often in narrow gaps between orange no-shoot targets. I was able to clean this stage in 7 shots, and it was definitely a confidence builder.

Stage 6, SHOOT HOUSE started with climbing the stairs and shooting 4 rounds from a simulated rooftop, then moving down the stairs and shooting 4 more shots from a shooting port. After taking my first two shots at the wrong target on the wrong berm (!) I was off to a bad start, and my concentration waivered. I had likely started the stage with too much magnification, which caused this error. This was an example of an early mistake impacted my performance for the rest of the stage. I never got into my groove again, and scored only 1 hit on this stage.

On Stage 7, ROCKS, A single full sized IPSC target was shot from 600yds away off of 5 rocks used as shooting positions with two shots each. I was slow moving from position to position here, and need more practice getting sitting and kneeling positions locked in quickly, but I did get 6 hits in 6 shots. I fought some feed issues on this stage, and lost significant times fighting with the gun. I need to spend more time getting the feeding more reliable.





Stage 8, PIPE OF PAIN was the last stage of the first day. The pipe was a large drainage culvert sunk into a hillside, with five shooting positions cut into it. The positions were awkward heights and sizes, and required a little creativity getting into and out of position. I was only able to get off 8 of the allowed 10 shots at the 66% IPSC target 387yds downrange, and scored 4 hits. I chose to sit for two of the positions, and kneel for two of them. The sitting probably cost me time, but added stability. Getting this trade-off of speed vs. stability right is something I need to work on more.

Day 2 of the match started with a unique twist – a 100yd cold-bore shot which had to complete before the 7am start of the match. Stage 13, ACCU-SHOT was shot on an Accu-Shot playing card. We had noticed condensation on the guns the previous day going from the air conditioned hotel room to the range, so I decided to make a single pull of a bore-snake through the gun before my shot. I broke what I thought was a very clean center shot, but hit nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ " to the left. I still broke the inner circle on the playing card, and earned full points, but definitely not as good a shot as I could have made.

Going in order of stage numbers (not the order we shot the stages in), next was Stage 14, CLIMBING TO THE UNKNOWN. In this stage, we did not get to locate or see the targets before we started. As we climbed up 5 increasingly high platforms, a new target appeared at each one. The first, third, and fifth target were UKD, so we did not know the range. I was able to get off two shots at each of the first four targets, but missed two because when I came to the second UKD target, I accidentally put my DOPE on for the fourth target. 6 Hits on this stage was not a bad performance, but that's five more points I gave up to silly mental mistakes.



Stage 15, KNOW YOUR LIMITS was a 10", 8", 6" and 4" target at 310 yards prone from a concrete slab. I was able to clean this for max points! Another prone stage I was able to shoot well on.

Stage 16, RACK LADDER was a single 12" target at 310yds shot off a slanted wood ladder built into a structure. At each slat in the ladder, you had to take two shots at the target, with 10 shots max. I got off 8 shots here, with 7 shots finding their mark. I had feed issues again here which cost me time.

Stage 17, DOGS AND DOGS was an all-prone stage that included prairie dogs and coyotes from 227yds to 657yds. We shot this, like many other prone stages, off a concrete pad. On this stage I tried something that I had seen many other shooters do earlier – I moved forward on the concrete pad and let my bipod legs sit in the dirt and grass just in front of the pad. This gave the bipod a better purchase compared to the smooth concrete, and definitely made for a better shooting position. I was able to clear this stage, with only a single target requiring a second shot (and therefore losing a point).



The next stage was #18, URBAN RTC. This stage was a challenging sequence of ports shot from a small staircase/platform. Targets ranged from 201yds to 362yds. Again mag issues kept me from even getting off 10 shots in the 90 seconds. I got off 8 shots and connected 4 times.



Stage 19 was URBAN MAYHEM. Starting a few feet away from a truck, you first had to climb up on the roof and engage 4 head-sized targets among hostage targets inside a bus at 280yds. Then you had to transfer to the hood of the truck and engage two more targets at nearby cars out to 317yds. Finally, a single head target at 662yds was shot from the prone position underneath the truck. When I first got to the roof of the truck, I was surprised how stable it was, but I missed the first two head shots. I didn't see a miss, and realized I had completely forgotten to hold my 1.0mil hold! I connected with the next two with ease, and moved to the hood, where I connected with both of the targets there. Being a little worried about time, I rushed to get to the ground, got in position, and when I went to pull the trigger, it was dead. I realized I had never run the bolt coming out of the last position, and by the time I fixed the problem, I didn't get my shot off. Two more mental failures, resulting in three missed shots on this stage alone.

Stage 20, BARRICADE BURST was an 8 round stage shot from a series of orange traffic barricades. With stable positions, the 12in target at 413yds was an easy shot, and I should have cleaned this stage, but I called one shot a miss, and it was.

Stage 21 was THE DUECE AND A HALF. From the back of a deuce and a half, you had to engage three different small poppers on the ground, from each of three positions. The first position was low on the bed rails shooting past the cab. The second position was shooting through the cab rear window, and the third was shooting from the top of the roof. The middle position here was tough, but the top and the bottom position was very secure and stable. I was able to make contact on 8 of my 9 shots, and had a very good stage here.



Stage 22 was CHOOSE YOUR POSITION. A simple string about 18" high needed to be shot over, with no support whatsoever. No shooting sticks, tripods, or anything else could touch the ground. I choose a low sitting position, but just could not get stable. I scored only one hit out of five shots on a 12" square at 291yds. This is another area I need to work on.

Results & Lessons Learned

I finished 70th out of 138 shooters – a performance I was very satisfied with. Some mental mistakes and some areas of weakness held me back from doing better, and there are a lot of take-aways from this match, including several things we know I need to work on in practice....

- My new load shot well all day. In general I had very few elevation problems with my data. It feels good to have a load that I have a good grip on.
- My prone shooting was strong all day. Both KYL style stages were good performances. (Stage #9 & #15)
- Fix feeding problems. There is no excuse for losing so many points to equipment problems. (Multiple stages)
- Too much magnification can still cause issues with follow up shots and identifying targets. (Stage #6)
- Practice on barricades. This still proves to be a potential weakness for me. I need to get better at seeing a barricade's height and identifying the best way to shoot it. A variable height barricade would help practice this. (Stage #11)
- Set realistic stage expectations, and plan accordingly. Spending a lot of time on a very tough shot only to run out of time for taking easy shots is a bad stage plan. (Stage #4)
- Forgetting to dial or hold DOPE when getting to a new target is still a chronic problem. I need to work on a mental process when identifying a new target that will help me with this.
- Unsupported positions need work. (Stage #22)
- Practice movers when I get a chance (Stage #10)
- Get a Wiebad PUMP Pillow. Now. I had to borrow one for about 6 stages of this match.
- Practice with the AW magazines. If I'm going to have them in my bag, I need to have enough confidence to take them out and use them. (Stage #12)
- Consistency will win matches. Even a few weak stages can move you WAY down in the standings in such a competitive field.

Summary

This match was one of the best-attended PRS matches we've ever been to, probably because of the combination of being closer to the middle of the country geographically, and because it was near the end of the year, and therefore lots of competitors were looking for a last burst of points to move them up in the standings. The level of competition was the highest of any match I've shot yet. I shot with a great squad of outstanding shooters, and learned a lot. I had a lot of very clean stages to remember, and a few stages that came apart that need to be used as a basis for further training.

facebook.com/BestTargets
www.beststeeltargets.com