

THE JUNIOR Shooter

AN INTRODUCTION FOR JUNIOR SHOOTERS & HUNTERS



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Editorial



Bob Green
SSAA National President

Welcome to Issue 7 of *The Junior Shooter*. First up in this issue, we interview young Queensland handgun shooter Blake Williams. Blake talks about his involvement in last year's NRA World Action Pistols Championships and shares some practical tips for shooting the challenging Action Match discipline.

Next, 16-year-old member Riley Philips (who was profiled in the February *Australian Shooter*) takes us to north-western Queensland and introduces us to her way of camping and hunting with her grandfather. Riley points out the importance of preparation, safety and responsibility in the field, as well as having a good time and sharing these experiences with your family and friends.

Senior correspondent John Dunn discusses the Yanco Program - a New South Wales sports shooting program that was kick-started by a junior shooter and her SSAA member father and aunt. It's a great initiative and we hope to see more like it around the country.

In addition to these stories, we have information about this year's SSAA National Junior Challenge (why not put your shooting skills to the test?) and a crossword puzzle for you to try. Don't forget to enter our juniors-only competition too!

Until next time, happy reading! ●

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The Falling Plate stage is probably one of the most recognisable Action Match stages, as the metallic targets fall when properly hit.



Blake Williams - World Action Pistol shooter

by Media Officer Rachael Andrews

An up-and-coming SSAA junior shooter with grand plans to compete on the world stage is well on his way after finishing second in the recent NRA World Action Pistol Championships in Sydney. Queensland's Blake Williams is a SSAA Action Match competitor through and through; it's where he started shooting four years ago and he says it's most definitely where he wants to stay.

Action Match is one of four NRA events held in Australia and the four courses of fire in Action Match are the same as those used in the United States event, the prestigious Bianchi Cup. Action Match consists of Practical, Barricade, Moving Target and Falling Plate matches and is one of the SSAA disciplines that allows for the use of self-loading (semi-automatic) handguns.

Blake started Action Match shooting at the age of 12 and has since put in hours at the range with his father Pete to adjust to what is a demanding and varied discipline. Three years into his Action Match career, Blake can attest to

hard work and determination being the key. He shares his thoughts and secrets to shooting Action Match with *The Junior Shooter*.

Falling Plate

Participants shoot a total of 24 shots, six shots at 10, 15, 20 and 25 yards, in varying times from six to nine seconds. Competitors can shoot from the standing or prone positions depending on the distance and the steel plate must fall for a score of 10 points and 1x.

Blake said Falling Plate was the most unforgiving part of Action Match, as the other courses of fire use paper targets and give you more of a chance of recording a score.

"When you practice, take your time to get your technique right and in competition, don't take it too fast, because as I'm told by all of the top shooters, the speed will come," he said.

"If you miss a plate, it's okay; you have to focus on the next plate. Take your time with your six shots, so you don't rush yourself."

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Barricade

In Barricade, the shooter aims at targets from behind a vertical barricade and can use this structure for support. Shots are fired with both hands in times varying from five to eight seconds. Two groups of six shots are fired at 10, 15, 25 and 35 yards for a total of 48 shots.

According to Blake, this is one of the most testing stages of the Action Match discipline, as it tests the strength in both your preferred shooting hand and your non-preferred. At each station, competitors are required to shoot six shots, three with each hand.

“It’s hard; you’re not really used to using the weaker hand and you use it a lot in Barricade,” Blake said. “You need to put a lot of practice into shooting with the other hand.”

Despite the tougher aspect of the Barricade, Blake maintains it is a fun event to do, so long as you stay focused and keep track of proceedings.

Practical

In Practical, targets are shot at 10, 15, 25 and 50 yards from either the prone or standing positions in one-, five- and six-second bursts of one, two and three shots. Practical is similar to Barricade, as it requires a lot of use of your non-preferred shooting hand at all distances.

For Blake, the most important part of Practical is to ensure you take the prone position properly, so you avoid injury over time.

“If you drop the wrong way onto your knees constantly, you can hurt yourself and cause problems in a couple of years,” he said.

Blake says that an important part of Practical shooting is to ensure you take the prone position properly, so you avoid injury over time.



The Moving Target stage requires concentration and quick reflexes.

“I’ve practised my prone position so I can try and avoid this and when you’re in a competition, you should always have a few tries at each position when you’re getting your sight-picture.”

The differing amount of time the shooter has to take their shots can also be difficult, says Blake. He recommends juniors take their time when getting their sight-picture, so they can make sense of where they are up to.

Moving Target

In the Moving Target stage, a target travels 60ft (around 18m) in six seconds as shooters aim from 10, 15, 20 and 25 yards. The competitor fires six shots from 10 and 15 yards twice and then fires three shots from 20 and 25 yards four times.

“The Moving Target can be hard at first, but once you get used to it, it gets easier,” said Blake. “The trick is you’ve got to keep moving your aim with the target, even while you’re taking your shots.”

“If you stop to aim and shoot, you get behind and it’s hard to catch up.”

The future

Blake is quite ambitious about his future and is looking forward to travelling and competing overseas.

In particular, he is aiming to take part in the Bianchi Cup and be selected in the Australian Team for the next World Action Pistol Championships. But when asked if he’s interested in branching out into other types of target shooting and firearms, he simply confirms he’s a “handgun man” through and through. ●

Being in the field

by Riley Philips

Over the past couple of years, I have been hunting on long trips with my grandfather Brian Short (a long-time member of the SSAA) on a number of occasions and while he has knowledge in the way he does things in the field, I am still learning. At 16, I have a long way to go to catch up, but I have found what does work for me, so let me share some of my brief hunting experiences and the way I view being on the trips away from home.

On the land

Where we go is out in Western Queensland and into the Gulf Country and thanks to the owners and managers of large properties, we can hunt game and hopefully, in some small way, help to control these pests that create many problems for them. My golden rule is that I do not hunt alone; I might one day, but that is far into the future. A couple of my other rules are to leave gates as you find them and never leave a mess behind, no matter where you are during the trip.

It's interesting to see the environment that feral animals such as pigs, goats, foxes, rabbits and cats live in. Mostly, it is natural bushland, but it can also be man-made environments in the form of dams, cleared blocks and improved pasture. I have been reading Pop's books and The University of Queensland's papers on game management and for animals to survive, good habitat is first and foremost. In the case of feral animals, the conditions humans provide are great and even if they are affected by drought, the feral animals seem to survive better than domestic animals. From what I have seen, our native animals survive well, but in drought times, they seem to suffer as well. At one time, it was sad to see two grey kangaroos moving slowly across a paddock, going to a nearly empty dam, to have a drink from the water that was just covering wet mud.

What do I take?

On each trip, I learn and see more and more, but it always comes back to one thing - preparing properly for the trip well beforehand, so there's less chance of problems later. I help Pop get all the main items ready, but my kit and what I take is *my* responsibility, especially my daypack.

Obviously, there are no frills, but after I have the most important parts together, perhaps I can take a couple of luxuries. Pop tells me that the bush can be great to be in, but it's very unforgiving if you treat hunting there as 'a walk in the park' or if you are not ready for the environment.

In the field, I am never without my daypack - it goes everywhere with me. I use a small one-day backpack with its own 2-litre water bladder and I carry the following small (small as I can get) items in it:

- A first-aid kit with snake bite bandages
- A UHF radio in its own pouch on a shoulder-strap with a whistle (it can be heard great distances in emergencies)
- A fold-up space blanket and poncho
- Waterproof matches
- An LED torch
- Toilet paper (cannot forget that, as it has many uses, such as starting a fire!)
- Compass with a magnifying section in it
- A 'mud map' (hand-drawn map) of the block
- Spare Explorer socks
- A Swiss Army pocket knife
- An army spoon/can opener
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- A special plastic bullet box that does not allow the eight rounds in it to rattle as you walk.

I wear a good leather belt, which holds my compact 10x binos, bullet pouch, utility knife, drop-point 125mm blade knife and my digital camera.



Riley with a boar.

The Junior Shooter

For something to eat during the day, sometimes up to 12 hours, I take two pieces of fruit, muesli bars, a chocolate energy bar or a fruit bar, cheese and biscuits and small boxes of dried fruit.

Clothing and bedding

I wear a long-sleeve cotton shirt, jeans and good ankle-covering leather boots. For headgear, I wear a floppy hat with an insect net folded in the top of it to use when the flying bugs and biting flies become too much to bear.

I have found that applying Dubbin (wax you put on leather shoes) on my boots before I leave home keeps them from drying out and keeps them pliable and softer, so I don't get blisters when I walk long distances. Good-quality socks are very important to keep your feet in good condition, so I use the Explorer wool kind.

For sleeping, we have stretchers in camp and I have a swag and lightweight sleeping bag with a -5C rating. A pillow is a must.



Riley finds a red deer wallow, a good sign that animals are in the area.

Rifle and ammunition

Even though I have a junior firearm licence, I am not yet allowed to own my own rifle, so for all the Western Queensland and Gulf Country trips, I use Pop's Ruger M77 Mk I bolt-action rifle in .308-calibre with a walnut stock and tapered hunting barrel fitted with a Bushnell variable 1.5-4.5x scope. As Pop says, "That's a nice bit of kit" - and I agree with him! The variable scope is handy, as it allows for all sorts of close and far distance shooting.

Safety in the field with a rifle is so important and one aspect I have learned is not to chamber a round until the last moment, and to keep the rifle pointed in a safe direction.

I reload my own ammunition under supervision with 150-grain Woodleigh projectiles and a suitable midrange powder load. Why have excessive recoil when a first-class projectile and load will have a better outcome? All the loads are tried out on the range to obtain the best results for me and I practise a lot before going bush. To gain, you don't always need to have pain.

I also use a Brno Model 2 .22-calibre or Brno Fox .22 Hornet rifle. Both rifles are topped with fixed 4x scopes on occasions.

Camp chores

Camp chores are very different than at home, but we all chip in and do the work in the camp. Pop and his mate Gerry (who has hunted with Pop for years) do most of the hard work, but we kids have to pull our weight too. I can do some chores including getting the daypacks and things ready for the next day's outing, helping with meals, filling the solar showers and doing my own washing.



Riley examines fresh deer rubs during her hunting trip.

A camp recipe

Another thing I have learned from Pop is how to make and bake a simple lemonade damper using Grandy's recipe in a camp oven. On this occasion, instead of an open fire and coals due to fire bans, the camp oven was placed in the oven of a restored wood stove. No-one was more surprised than me when my first baking came out well! Grandy has let me share the recipe with you, so here it is:

Ingredients

- 3 cups self-raising flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- a dob of butter
- 1½ cups fresh lemonade

Method

Mix the dry ingredients together and then add the liquids. Knead it together a bit, pop it in the camp oven and let it rise in a quiet place.

After it has risen, put it in the oven and let it cook for 20-25 minutes until it turns golden brown. You can check if it's cooked by pushing a knife blade into it and it comes out dry.

Serve hot with butter.

Summary

I view hunting this way: Being prepared makes the trip safe and worthwhile, and if you are aware of the country you are going into, you can cope with conditions in a better way. Any other way is not an option. You have to include in your kit the right clothing, camping gear, rifles, ammunition and even down to the right bits for the camp kitchen.

Extra bits do make for a good camp and on our last trip, Pop used a coffee plunger for his early-morning 'coffee hit', as he calls it. I also used a silver tea strainer for my cuppa. I picked up both items for a few dollars at the Sunday markets. However, whatever you carry in your daypack has to have a purpose and if it doesn't, then you don't need it.

As far as binoculars go, you definitely need them, as your eyesight cannot tell the difference between a black stump and a black pig at 100m, and for peering into scrub at closer range, you would be surprised at what binos can pick up when your eyes don't.

Very soon, Pop and I will be heading into red deer country to decide if this year's roar will be worthwhile. I

have never seen red deer in the wild before and it will present a new way of hunting, but I'm looking forward to it. ●



2011 SSAA National Junior Challenge

SSAA junior members have the chance to show off their shooting skills in a national juniors-only competition later this year. The SSAA National Junior Challenge will run from July 14 to 17 at the SSAA ACT Marjura Range. The event will include three competitions over four days and the only requirement is that you have to be a SSAA member.

The Rimfire Field Rifle competition will consist of 40 shots on Friday, July 15, following a coaching clinic for all participants. Saturday's 3-Positional match will occur after two morning training sessions in both Field Rifle and 3-Positional. These training sessions will be valuable for junior shooters of all skill levels, as it is always possible for improvements. All competitions will be conducted to meet the relevant SSAA rules.

Shooters will compete in two age groups: Under 15 years and 15-18 years. Beginners and right up to

experienced shooters are invited to take part. National medals for first, second and third places for each age group are available in each event and an overall National Junior Challenge Champion title will also be awarded. Presentations will be held daily, with the final presentation to be held on the last day to reveal the overall winner of the National Junior Challenge.

Competitors can opt to participate in individual events for \$15 or all three for \$40. Coaching clinic participation incurs an additional cost of \$5 per session. Accommodation is also available on site for a small fee of \$10 per person and bookings are essential.

Nominations close for this event on Friday, June 27 and nomination forms are available online at www.ssaa.org.au/juniorsports For more information about the event, contact Wendy Hutton at SSAA ACT on 02 6161 3878 or email whiskerw@grapevine.com.au

My introduction to the shooting sports

by Jayden Shaw

During the summer holidays, my cousin Brennan and I stayed for five weeks with my grandfather, who we call Pop. Pop is a member of the SSAA and shoots at the SSAA Ravenshoe branch in North Queensland. I am 12 years old and was very keen to shoot at the SSAA branch on the Ravenshoe Highlanders Complex under Pop's supervision. For me, shooting was the best experience I could ever have. Shooting for the first time under the safe supervision of Pop and his shooting colleagues has made me want to shoot forever. I think it's a fun, competitive sport that you probably could do for your whole life too!

Introduction to safe shooting

Pop introduced Brennan and me to the range officer Mic Ball, who explained to us the importance of firearm safety and courtesy to other people using the range. Shooting safely means you have more fun by being able to concentrate properly on your shooting technique and get better scores. You also get to make friends with all the other people using the range.

Brennan and I do not have shooters licences, so we filled out a Form 33 each time we attended the range. We began shooting seated at a bench rest with Pop's Brno .22 bolt-action repeater rifle with a Karl Kahles scope. Pop's rifle is 43 years old, but it looks brand-new.

In the beginning, we loaded the cartridges singly rather than from the rifle's magazine because Pop said it is what you do when you are first learning to shoot safely. From the bench rest, I chose to shoot at the feral cat silhouette paper target at 50m. By the second day on the range, I was shooting 15mm groups. On the third day, I shot metal silhouettes at 100m.

Competition shooting

I have only been in one shooting competition so far and this was at the SSAA Ravenshoe branch. It was a 50m 3-Positional .22 Rimfire event and was also the first junior competition held at the club.

My coach, Jeff De Lacey, is an Australian muzzleloading gold medallist and a member of the Ravenshoe club. Jeff is a very good coach. I was very lucky because he is friendly and generous with his advice, showing me the shooting techniques necessary for this event. With Jeff's coaching, I won

The feral cat silhouette paper target has lots of aiming points for shooting groups and improving technique. Jayden began each session at 50m with the 10s and worked out to the 6s.



Jayden Shaw during his second day at the Ravenshoe Highlanders Range with his Pop's Brno rifle.

the competition. I was so surprised. It felt so different to win a competition. I felt so happy and proud for the first time in my life and decided I would like to be in the Commonwealth Games as soon as possible!

The SSAA Ravenshoe branch

The SSAA branch at the Ravenshoe Highlanders Shooting Complex is a welcoming place for juniors to come and shoot. It is a friendly, safe environment, with nice people to talk to and where you can make new friends, which is just right for kids. Another member, Kevin Chatfield, even invited me to try out with his Anschutz target rifle - now that was a very good experience. I think being a junior shooter and meeting great people is as good as it gets for kids.

Shooting and conservation

For all his life, my Pop has combined his enjoyment of bush shooting with environmental campaigning to protect environmentally and culturally important places. His father, my great-grandfather, is 92 years old and a World War II veteran and Rat of Tobruk.

When Pop was little, life in the bush was very hard and he hunted with his dad for food. Pop says that people who want to hunt should always try to be competent shots and show proper consideration for the animals they hunt.

Kids like me love shooting safely with good people in an environmentally sustainable way and I hope our democracy will always protect our right to do this. ●

A boy's first buck

by Anton Jurasovic



All of my children have spent their growing years accompanying me on regular hunting and fishing trips. However, Tasmanian gun laws require that a child must be 16 years of age before they can receive a minor's permit, which allows the supervised use of a firearm in the field. As a result, my kids have had to content themselves with being there, but not being able to actually shoot. I have encouraged them to participate in other ways, such as joining in on stalks, helping with butchering game and so on, but the chance to use a firearm, and actually become a hunter, is something that they have impatiently waited on.

The March 2008 opening of the Tasmanian fallow buck season was not long after my son David's 16 birthday and was eagerly awaited by him. He had received his minor's permit a couple of months beforehand and had been practising with my Winchester Featherweight .270 in anticipation of hunting his first buck. A week or so before the season opened, David was able to present his minor's permit and purchase a deer licence

in his name, complete with one buck and one doe tag.

The property where I hunt fallow allows each paid-up hunting club member to take one buck per year, plus many does outside of buck season. I gladly arranged for my buck to be taken by David that year - and he was excited to finally be able to hunt a deer after so many years of watching me do "all the fun stuff".

We travelled to the hunting property the night before the Saturday opening of the season. David's excitement rubbed off onto me - I don't think I've slept so poorly before opening day for many years! We were up well before dawn and had a good feed before walking to a vantage point a couple of kilometres from the hut we were staying in. We were in position just as the sky began to lighten, and the wind was good. The forecast was for an unseasonably hot day and the countryside we were hunting was dry from the ongoing drought. A lot of deer had migrated from even drier lower elevations onto the highland property we were hunting, so we were expecting to see a lot of game.



A very happy and relieved young hunter, enjoying the thrill of succeeding on his first fallow buck hunt.

I had previously discussed with David what his trophy aspirations were. He was keen to look over the deer available and not just take the first buck that stepped into range, but he clearly stated that he wanted to succeed in taking a medium-sized or better buck during the weekend we had available, so he wasn't going to hold out for a big trophy. Taking a mid-sized set of antlers on his first buck hunt would be more than enough reward for him. I let him know that I thought this was a good attitude for our hunt. The memories we would forge together during his first successful buck hunt would be more important than a big trophy, and more achievable as well.

As soon as the intensifying morning light allowed, we began systematically glassing the large area of open country around our vantage point. We picked out a number of small herds of deer, mostly does with fawns, but some young bucks were spotted as well. None of the bucks were big enough to consider stalking, so we continued to glass for the

first few hours of the day in the hope that some older bucks may make an appearance. Around midmorning, we decided to move to another location and continue glassing.

While travelling to the new glassing spot, we disturbed a herd of does, which ran up the gully we were in and pushed a small bachelor herd out of a fern patch in which they had been bedded near the head of the gully. These bucks were of an older age class than any others we had seen and one of them really stood out. He was long and wide, with significant palms.

The bucks ran with the does and disappeared over the brow of the hill at the top of the gully. I suspected that the bucks hadn't seen or smelled us, so there was a small chance that they would stop soon after disappearing from view. David and I hurried up to the crest and carefully looked over it, through a screen of eucalypts, into a marshy paddock lined by ti-tree. Four hundred metres away, in the middle of the marsh, stood five good bucks nervously looking around. The doe herd was nowhere to be seen. We



A herd of fallow bucks in shiny summer coats and still in velvet, spotted during preseason scouting.

had a good look at the best buck through our binoculars and David said he would be keen to shoot it. Heck, it was a beauty and at more than 220 Douglas points, *I* would have been happy to shoot it!

The bucks were very nervous, looking around in all directions trying to figure out what had disturbed the doe herd. David had practised with the .270 out to 250m, so it was too far for him to take a shot. We began to try to stalk closer, but although I'm sure they hadn't picked us out, within a few minutes, they decided to trot away from us and disappeared into the thickest ti-tree you can imagine. David was quite disappointed that he'd almost had a chance at such a good buck, but missed out.

We continued to our next glassing location, but a long session there resulted in only young animals being seen. A walking and glassing session as we made our way back to the hut at the end of the day resulted in spotting some

mid-sized bucks just before dusk, but they were too far away to stalk in the fading light. I considered it a good day's hunting, with a lot of deer seen, including one ripper.

We slept fairly well that night and repeated the pre-dawn walk to a new glassing vantage the next morning. Straining to distinguish whether the deer I could see in the half-light were bucks or not, I suddenly saw a light-colored flash of antler above one of them, confirming my hopes. As the light improved, we could pick out 10 or so small- to medium-sized bucks near a big fern bank a few hundred metres from us. David indicated that several of them were big enough for him to be happy with, so we decided to try to hunt them.

As we watched, they slowly fed up the fern bank, appearing and disappearing among the tall fronds. We waited until they all appeared to be over the top of the bank and then began to move in on them, hoping to find them in range when we came up over the fern bank following them.

Juniors-only competition

Only junior SSAA members are eligible to enter. One entry per member per competition. To enter, simply write your name, address and membership number on the back of an envelope and send it to:

May Junior competition
SSAA Media & Publications
PO Box 2520, Unley, SA 5061

or online at www.australianshooter.com.au

Winner randomly drawn June 10, 2011

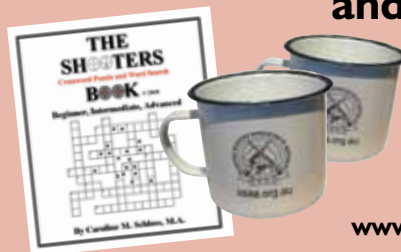
WIN 1 of 2 crossword book and enamel cup packs

Valued at \$45 each

Kindly donated by
SSAA Store and
The Shooters Crossword

www.ssaa.org.au/store

www.shooterscrosswordpuzzle.com



The Junior Shooter

When we slowly eased our way over the top, we spotted a couple of deer only 30m from us feeding in scrubby bush, but of course, both of them were quite small bucks, so we carefully waited, hoping one of the bigger ones would show itself among the scrub. Our plan was ruined when a wallaby burst out of the ferns near us and bounded through the deer herd, startling them into rapid movement. In no time, they were gone, and although we followed a little way, we never saw them again. David was very disappointed to have been so close to a buck that he was happy to take and then have things fall to pieces at the last minute through no real fault of his own.

I decided we should look at an area we hadn't been to yet, where I'd occasionally found bucks bedded during the middle of the day in the past. After a decent walk to a small bit of high ground overlooking the area in question, we began glassing. David spotted them at the same time I did. A small group of bucks was bedded in the open, about 500m from us. Most were small, but one was bigger than the others and after studying it for a while, David decided he would be happy to take him.

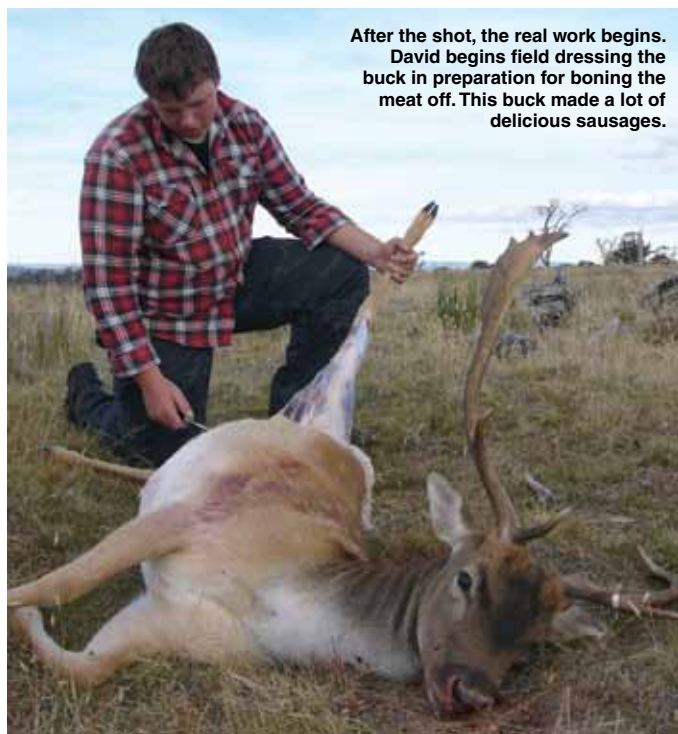
There was basically no cover between us and the herd, but they were relaxed, the wind was good and we had plenty of daylight, so I said to David that we should try to carefully crawl closer to them. The slow crawling took quite a while, but it worked, and the herd did not spot us approaching. Eventually, we set up in a good position and when I took a rangefinder reading, it said we were 220m from the buck we wanted. Some of the herd were now standing, so I cautioned David to wait for his buck to stand before taking the shot. We didn't have to wait long before the buck stood and began feeding.

David set up on the bipod next to me, while I watched the deer through my binoculars. I quietly reminded him to wait for a broadside shot, line up the shoulder and make sure he squeezed the trigger gently. At the sound of the shot, I saw a distinct reaction to the hit and the buck lurched to the right for a few metres, before crashing to the ground. "You got

him!" I shouted to David and excitedly slapped his back in congratulation. He looked pretty pleased with himself.

On approaching the deer, it was apparent that the shot was pretty much perfect - right on the shoulder, resulting in a clean kill. I couldn't have been prouder. David was ecstatic to have succeeded too. We set about taking a heap of photos to document his first fallow buck. The antlers were medium sized, but had palms on both sides, and a total of 16 points. David field-dressed the buck and then we packed up for home, discussing what we would do with the antlers and meat. It was decided that we would do a skull mount on a shield and use the venison for sausages, which David particularly enjoys.

It was a great first buck for a boy and a fantastic hunting experience for both of us. ●



After the shot, the real work begins. David begins field dressing the buck in preparation for boning the meat off. This buck made a lot of delicious sausages.

Shooting video games

We are always looking for new ways to educate and entertain our readers about sport shooting and recreational hunting - that's why we have put a few shooting-related video games on our website.

These video games provide users with an understanding of ballistics, optical equipment and the principles of correct sighting, aiming and shooting techniques, with

realistic wind conditions and scenery as close as you can get to range and field practice. Check out the 'Video games' section at www.ssaa.org.au/multimedia

If you know of any other fun and educational shooting video games, feel free to email Media Officer Rachael Andrews on media@ssaa.org.au

Getting into the shooting sports with the Yanco Program



While these juniors were learning correct stances with unloaded firearms, the photograph was taken by remote control means.

by senior correspondent John Dunn

For some time now, the SSAA has been promoting its Sign up a Junior program, encouraging all members to go out of their way to introduce kids to the shooting sports. The potential benefits are enormous, not just to the SSAA, but also to the kids involved, the shooting sports in general and perhaps most importantly to the community at large. As a group, hunters and shooters are some of the most responsible people you will find and as we're all aware, shooting is statistically one of the safest sports there is. We all need to contribute in whatever way we can, so when I was asked to be a guest speaker one weekend at something called simply the 'Yanco Program', I was happy to oblige.

The Yanco Program is the brainchild of SSAA members Kathy Tobler and Brett Bensley. It came about when Brett's daughter Skye (Kathy's niece) became a student at Yanco Agricultural High School (YAHC), a residential school in the Riverina region of New South Wales.

Though the kids are offered a range of recreational activities, when Skye started in 2010, shooting was not one of them. Given that the bulk of students are country kids who will come into contact with firearms on a regular basis at home, Kathy saw that as something of an oversight. She

raised the idea with Brett who in turn talked to the school about the possibility of introducing a firearms safety program for the kids. The concept was well received and in the second term of 2010, the program kicked off with the school's blessing.

Before it could begin, there was the inevitable paperwork to be completed, along with a risk assessment process that ensured the kids' safety was paramount at all times. Parental approval was essential for all participants, as was a Firearms Safety Awareness Course and the acquisition of the appropriate Junior Shooter permits. All those who put their hands up were also encouraged to join the SSAA.

The program is not part of the regular school curriculum, but is offered as an extracurricular weekend activity for boarders. The kids attend under the supervision of two teachers, who give up their own time to be there. The school provides a bus for transport, with the costs subsidised for distances up to 200km from the school. Beyond that distance, a per-kilometre charge is applied. Participants also have to pay for their own food for each weekend, as well as any other costs such as range fees and ammunition, the latter of which is provided by Nioa for the program at cost.

The Junior Shooter

YAHC vice principal Denis Benjamin believes the Yanco Program is the only program of its kind offered by a residential high school in New South Wales and he is enthusiastic about the benefits to the kids. All those involved are well disciplined and those attributes flow on, not just into their schoolwork, but into their everyday lives.

The primary focus of the program is firearms safety and the best place to teach that is on the range - just as there's no better place to teach newcomers the principles of how to shoot. Paper targets don't lie! Only rimfire rifles are used and as far as possible, similar rifle types are provided for the shooters. Firearms can only be picked up, loaded (one round at a time) and fired under the command of the range officer. No infringements of the rules are tolerated.

On Saturday, February 19 this year, I turned up at the Bowral Pistol Club range in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales, as I'd promised Kathy I would, and saw a 3-Positional shoot in progress. There were 20 kids present, their ages ranging from 12 to 18. Divided into three details, they were working their way through the match, with the teachers shooting alongside them. Volunteer shooters helped behind the firing line, giving individual shooters pointers about how to shoot the various positions and suggesting changes to stance or posture where required.

Each detail was run in accordance with the time limits and rules of the discipline. At the end of each detail, shooters had to go forward and retrieve their own targets before setting up fresh ones for the next group. Retrieved targets were then scored for possible awards and though there was no pressure being placed on anyone to compete, it was obvious that some of them were taking a great deal of satisfaction in doing better than others.

The shoot was a very well organised and smoothly run operation. As an outsider walking in, it was obvious that everyone was enjoying themselves immensely. You could see it in their faces and hear it in the gentle, stirring exchanges with each other; all of it good natured, some of it extended to include the teachers or the volunteer helpers.

At the time of writing, the program is very popular with the students. From the 15 initially interested, the program has grown. Indeed, on the weekend I attended, there weren't enough seats on the bus for everyone who wanted to go and the school couldn't afford to run a second one.

The benefits of the program are already beginning to flow on. During a trip home, one of the participants questioned his father's firearms safety practices. Better still, he was able to explain *why* it should be done the way he'd been taught on the range. The dad listened and his practices have now changed.

It's been a long time since I ran into such a self-disciplined, responsible, motivated and interested group of kids. That the program has proved so successful is a credit to the organisers, the parents, the Yanco Agricultural High School and the teachers who give up their weekends to make sure their students are provided with the opportunity to have a safe and enjoyable time away from the school environment. But, most of all, it's a credit to the kids themselves. They're the ones who will reap the long-term rewards as responsible shooters and hunters in their respective communities. We need more of them. ●



Robert Tobler talks tactics with a group of young shooters. The relationship between the participants and organisers like Robert is obviously based on high levels of mutual respect.



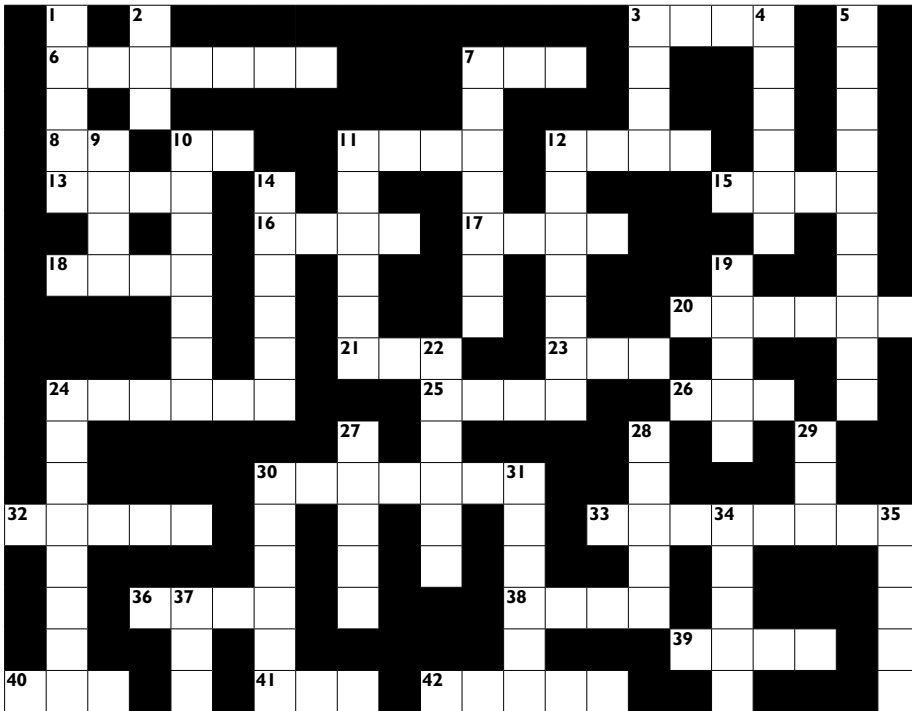
Checking scores while setting up targets for the next detail.



Program creators Kathy Tobler and Brett Bensley score targets under the watchful eye of a participant.

Firearms 101 - beginner's basics

Reproduced with permission from *The Shooters Crossword Puzzle & World Search Book*
 www.shooterscrosswordpuzzle.com



Across

- 3 A strip of metal used to hold a number of cartridges
- 6 A large collection of firearms
- 7 Contains an easily detonated charge of fulminate
- 8 Ceska Zbrojovka (abbr)
- 10 Lead shotgun pellet
- 11 The case of a shotgun cartridge
- 12 The bottom part of a handgun grip of rear portion of a riflestock
- 13 The rear upper edge of a buttstock
- 15 The forward tip of a bullet
- 16 The upper edge of a buttstock
- 17 A breechblock to open or close the action
- 18 Hollow interior of a barrel
- 20 A term often incorrectly applied to sporting firearms
- 21 A flat strip of metal fastened to the top of a rifle
- 23 The extreme lower end of a buttstock

- 24 A gun that uses compressed air
- 25 The projecting edges around the base of some cartridges and all shotshells
- 26 [Semi] Automatic Colt Pistol (abbr)
- 30 A device that projects a bullet or shot
- 32 A common term for an empty cartridge case
- 33 Short rifles with a barrel less than 22 inches long
- 36 A heavy lockable cabinet used to hold firearms or ammunition
- 38 A term used to describe the sensation felt by recoil, especially shotguns
- 39 To insert ammunition
- 40 A wooden barrel used to store gun powder
- 41 A cartridge that fails to fire
- 42 A small piece of cloth used to clean the bore of a gun

Down

- 1 An organised shooting competition or event
- 2 Pounds per square inch (abbr)
- 3 Tilting a rifle or handgun to the side
- 4 Technically, a handgun with a fixed chamber
- 5 Refers to the curved path of a bullet
- 7 The diameter of a rifle barrel bore
- 9 The act of adjusting the sight on a rifle or handgun
- 10 A blue-black colored finish on steel and barrels
- 11 The part of a gun's mechanism that strikes the firing pin
- 12 Elongated fired projectiles
- 14 The operating mechanism of any firearm
- 19 Used to solidly support a rifle while the shooter fires at a target
- 22 A tool used to cut rifling grooves into the bore of a barrel
- 24 The hole in the peep-sight
- 27 A unit of weight used to measure bullets and powder charges
- 28 A cartridge loaded only with primer
- 29 A common firearm term for what hunters and recreational shooters use
- 30 The front part of a rifle or shotgun stock located underneath the barrel
- 31 Early smoothbore firearms that fire a single ball
- 34 A two-legged device the supports the fore-end
- 35 An optical telescopic sight with cross-hairs
- 37 Another word for 'firearm'

To check your answers, go to www.ssaa.org.au/junior-shooter ●

SPONSOR A JUNIOR

AND

SAVE your sport

It's your choice - sign up a junior or our sport will vanish

SSAA National's 'Sign up a Junior' campaign was launched to help introduce youngsters to recreational shooting. Juniors are essential to the ongoing strength and vitality of the SSAA and we are seeking your support to protect and ensure the future of the shooting sports in Australia.

Simply fill in the form below with the junior's details and your details as the 'sponsoring member'. You can add more than one junior by photocopying the form and adding an extra \$21 per junior.

As an incentive to promote the campaign,

all junior members who join or renew their membership between January 1 and December 31, 2011, will go into the draw to win \$500 worth of SSAA merchandise.

Additionally, all adults who sponsor a junior member will go into the draw to win \$1000 worth of SSAA merchandise!



\$21 - includes 11 issues of the *Australian Shooter*

\$46 - includes 11 issues of the *Australian Shooter* and 4 issues of *Australian Hunter* magazine

Membership No.

Has the junior been a member before? Yes/No

Details of junior being signed up - (must be under 18)

Branch (if known) Sex (please circle) M / F
 First name Middle name Last name
 Home address P/C.....
 Date of birth OFFICE USE ONLY

Details of sponsoring member:

First name Middle name..... Last name.....
 Membership No.

Payment options

Enclosed is payment for the amount of \$.....

Cheque Money order MasterCard Visa

Card number

Expiry date Signature.....

Cheques payable to the Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia

- Fees are per year unless specified and include GST.

I also wish to donate \$..... to the SSAA

**MAIL TO: MEMBERSHIP OFFICE ,
 PO BOX 282, Plumpton, NSW 2761**

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