



# Talbot on target! Rimfire Rifle Metallic Silhouette

Communications Officer Sam Talbot continues his quest to shoot the SSAA disciplines, this month setting his sights on Rimfire Rifle Metallic Silhouette.



This month I again tried my hand at metallic silhouettes but instead of handguns I was back using a .22 rifle. Reactive targets like metallic silhouettes are a lot of fun and it's quite satisfying to be able to knock something over. With silhouettes it doesn't matter how perfectly centred your shot is, all that matters is the target falls over, meaning there's less pressure to achieve that elusive bullseye or the disappointment of barely missing a higher scoring ring.

### How it works

Shooters in Rifle Metallic Silhouette (RMS) use air, rimfire, centrefire, service or black powder rifles to knock down metal animal-shaped targets. Throughout this article I will be speaking about the rimfire class, although each of the competition classes are quite similar with target distances and

just a few other rules differentiating them.

Like all other metallic silhouette competitions, the rimfire rifle one is made up of 40 rounds. In rimfire, these shots are taken from the standing position and targets are scaled down to one-fifth the standard centrefire size. The idea is each target is scaled down based on being the correct size at 200m. The distances used in rimfire are chickens 40m, pigs 60m, turkeys 77m and rams at 100m. Depending on the range though, these numbers may be slightly different.

The targets are placed on steel stands in banks of five and competitors have 2½ minutes to fire one shot at each target from left to right. Even if you miss a target you move on to the next one on the bank (striking a target out of order doesn't count as a hit). There's a small break after the first five shots and competitors are given

another 2½ minutes to shoot the five targets on the adjacent bank. This process is repeated for each of the animal targets to make up the 40 rounds.

### Extra gear and advice

Before heading to the range I asked Andrew Judd, National Discipline Chairman for RMS, if he had any advice. "There are only a few differences with silhouettes compared to shooting paper," said Juddy. "It's a pretty hard discipline but also quite social which makes up for some of the difficulty."

I asked him about wobbling while aiming and what I could do to minimise it, given shooting is done from the standing position. Juddy told me not to worry about it and just aim for the middle of the target. "Everybody wobbles, the good shooters just wobble less," he said. "Plus we get the benefit of either hitting or missing and there are no extra rewards for hitting the dead centre.

"One thing you must do though is make sure your windage is spot on for the turkeys. Since they're tall and narrow the wind can easily make you miss left or right," he said. "Turkeys tend to be the target people struggle with most."

For ammo I used SK Standard Plus which is a solid all-rounder that doesn't break the bank - one of the benefits of shooting rimfire. Any ammo is permitted in rimfire except for hypervelocity. If the range officer believes your ammo will or has damaged the targets, you won't be allowed to use it. Beyond that there's not much else you need to get started in RMS. If you're curious about getting your rifle sorted, take a look at my experiences in the June edition of *Australian Shooter*.

### Warming up

The section captain for Rifle Scoped



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Silhouette at SSAA Para, Mark West, generously offered me the use of his rifle for the competition. His Anschutz 1217 Silhouette model complete with Leupold scope was a noticeable step up from my CZ 452. While using the Anschutz I also realised just how heavy the trigger on my rifle is. Maintaining steadiness while pulling the trigger on my rifle is a lot harder than on Mark's, so reducing the weight needed to pull my trigger is something I have to address. Additionally, the Anschutz felt quite a bit lighter than my rifle.

Despite having not shot for a while, my warm-up shots felt pretty good and I managed to knock a few targets over. I was also lucky enough to receive advice from talented junior shooter Kelsey Rawlings who had just won a slew of medals at the SSAA National Junior Challenge. Kelsey reminded me of the importance of following through, something I wasn't doing during practice. Remaining steady well after taking my shots instantly improved performance.

Mark recommended I shoot with the scope at 12-power which made the targets clear enough while still accounting for my wobbles. Mark, on the other hand, as a much more competent and experienced shooter used 20-power. Observant readers may notice from the pictures there were

no wind flags on the range. This is a bit unusual but it was a friendly competition and there wasn't much wind anyway.

### Competition

This was structured so each detail completed two runs of animals before switching with their spotter. Shooters start on any animal but always move to the further away animal as their next target.

I started on pigs which are arguably the easiest target partly due to their shape and size as well as proximity in proportion to their size. With four of the 10 pigs down by the time I completed both my banks I was fairly pleased and on target to make my goal of double figures by the end of the competition.

After pigs it was time to take on the turkeys and, despite Juddy's warnings, it turned out I still wasn't prepared for them. Despite feeling like I was hitting the right places I only managed to dislodge one turkey. Confirming it wasn't just me though, Mark only toppled half the turkeys even after knocking over all 10 pigs. With this as evidence I conclude pigs are the easiest and turkeys the hardest.

Next up were rams and despite being an intimidating 100m away I managed to repeat my effort on the pigs by



Starting to look more professional.



Beautiful conditions at the top range at SSAA Para.

Sam was happy hitting double figures.

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knocking down four of the 10. This moved my total to nine, leaving me just one shy of double figures and with chickens still to come.

The tiny stature of the chickens more than makes up for them only being 40m away. With pressure mounting, an awkward shadow behind the chickens complicated matters further, although the shadow only affected viewing with the naked eye and didn't really affect my shooting or ability to see targets while looking down the scope.

I hit two of the five chickens on my first bank before losing the plot a little and rushing some shots unnecessarily on the second bank, missing all remaining chickens. Nevertheless, that brought my total score to 11 and a fairly decent effort for my first time shooting RMS. And for the record Mark, my shooting coach for the day, took first place with a score of 32/40.

### Awards and grades

Many disciplines have proficiency awards which shooters can earn as they become

### Survivalist Adam returns



YOU MAY RECALL a few months ago I met Adam during a competition with his Little Badger rifle. I bumped into him again at the silhouette shoot and he showed me some of the additions he's made to the Little Badger. Since this was a scoped rimfire silhouette competition Adam had attached a scope but his lightweight rifle now also included a knife, compass, fire-lighting flint and a length of ultra-strong spectra rope.



Keeping a close eye on scoring.

more competent. For RMS the Junior Rimfire award is earned if a score of 10 or more is achieved. Unfortunately I'm not a junior so am not eligible for this, but I am eligible for all the other Rimfire awards. The Bronze Rimfire Award is given for a score of 15 or more, meaning my 11/40 is just four targets shy of a Bronze award.

The Silver Rimfire Award is won with a score of 22 or above, Gold with 28 or more and the Masters Award for 34 or above. Awards must be won in sequence though - bronze then silver, gold and masters - and must be shot on a SSAA registered range in a registered match under supervision of a range officer.

As for grading, a score of 11 puts me

solidly in B-grade (that might sound okay but it's actually the lowest, the other grades being A, AA, AAA and Master). To move into A-grade I need to shoot two scores above 14 and I'll make this or the Bronze award my next goal.

### Scoring and spotting

Shooters were separated into three details for competition and when I wasn't shooting I was scoring for someone. Each shooter had their own scorer who could also assist with which target the shooter was up to. The scorer is also there to keep an eye on the time limit but 2½ minutes proved plenty for all shooters given the excellent weather.



Sam checks out Mark's Anschutz 1217 silhouette rifle.

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## Lessons learned

Although it may not be fully represented in my scores, I feel my standing position has improved dramatically. Moving my left hand up to the triggerguard rather than further down the stock made a noticeable improvement in steadiness and comfort. Interestingly, lots of participants at this competition shot without resting their elbow against their body, demonstrating you really should try different positions and see what works best.

Mark had noticed my wobbles tend to be up and down which is useful to know. In theory this should make shooting the narrow and tall turkeys easier but as all good shooters know, theory doesn't always translate to practical. Knowing I need to mostly work on my up and down wobble gives me a clear area to practise and improve on ahead of my next outing.

## Spinning targets?

Several competitors told me how they've hit a target, had it spin around and remain standing. They assured me it's possible and have seen it happen but I have my doubts.

## Conclusion

The popularity of RMS is no coincidence. Lots of people prefer reactive targets which



SSAA LA's Kate Fantinel proudly displays a chicken she toppled.

can be knocked over compared to reactionless paper targets. RMS offers plenty of time to socialise while still delivering an interesting challenge to beginners and masters alike. It's also easy to keep track of your scores from competition to competition and setting personal goals is simple.

Shooters also get plenty of exercise between rounds as they walk out to the banks to pick up knocked-over targets, which is a nice bonus. So if you've been looking for a new rimfire rifle discipline or you just like knocking things over, I'd give RMS a go. ●



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