

**31<sup>st</sup> August & 1<sup>st</sup> September 2007**

By That Correspondent

Friday was a very genteel day, with a relatively late start by Canadian standards. The team pottered down to the range for a bit of zeroing at 700 and 800 metres in the morning, including practice of pilot shots, volley fire and other useful tricks in the team's armoury for trickier wind conditions. Those with spare rifles also put a few shots down to check that they would be able to put down a useful shot if the worst happened.

At lunchtime came the much anticipated and dreaded announcement of the final team for the Palma match. With sixteen shooting slots and nineteen shooters, there were always going to be three bitterly disappointed team members. Do not forget that all of the team have trained incredibly hard for two and a half years and sacrificed so much time with the single aim of representing a winning Great Britain team in the match.

With the team kit all ready to go and the final announcement made, the vans made their way back to the hotel, leaving everyone with some time to catch a film or have a brief nap. It was a fairly quiet evening also, with many of the team eating in the hotel rather than heading out for the bright lights of Bells Corners.

And so to the first day of the Palma Match.

When the team left the hotel this morning at 06:15 it was very cool and still, with no cloud cover at all. A quick breakfast followed, and everyone involved checked that they were good to go onto the range to weigh triggers an hour later, which took a little longer than anticipated as there never seemed to be a trigger weighing station without at least one full team waiting to be checked. After a brief hiatus, the team cracked on at 700 metres at a brisk pace in a slightly fickle left-handed wind, firing fast to great effect. Some fine shooting followed, with Parag Patel's 150.15 being worthy of particular note; however David Luckman was only a single 'X' behind, as his cooking bull first sighter was converted. Finishing some 35 minutes before the allotted time, the team had managed a perfect 2400 with 189 shots in the ten inch 'X' ring, which is the first time that any team had cleaned a range in the Palma match. The South Africans were not far behind on two off, being chased by the Canadians a point behind.



Moving back to 800 metres, the wind became significantly trickier, with several waits required while it shifted through zero or entered an unsettled period. With an overall bracket of two left to just over four right, it was clearly important to pick when not to fire, and several sighters were fired out of turn by waiting shooters to enable the coaches to home in on the correct adjustment. At the end of the range, GB had dropped a total of 21 points to retain the lead, fourteen points ahead of the Aussies, and a further six points ahead of the South Africans.

All of the teams headed off the range for a rather tense lunch, and probably a team talk. Certainly our Head Coach and Team Captain took the opportunity to remind everyone that none of the other teams were going to let the lead stand if they could do anything about it. The daily teddy out of pram award went to Hinch, for managing to fall out of his coaching chair, nearly squashing Ross McQuillan in the process. The first reserve thought that his luck was in for a brief moment, but it was not to be!

The wind at 900 metres was again a tricky fishtail from the front, but with the flags and mirage disagreeing in many cases. This led to a number of prolonged periods of waiting for the wind to return to a more amenable value, and a number of shooters had to sacrifice scoring shots for the team to bring others back into the centre. After a couple of false starts, smoother operation resumed and the range was brought to a close. Despite a couple of wobbly moments, GB had extended their lead over their opponents and ended up thirty points up on the South African team, who had put in a strong showing at the final range.

TEAM MATCH: PALMA		TEAM NAME: GREAT BRITAIN																					
TEAM CAPTAIN: M. K. TOWNSEND																							
ADJUTANT: N. J. BALL																							
MAIN COACH: P. N. HINCHLIFFE																							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	
33	ROBERTS B. H.																150	150	149				449
	LICKMAN B. C.																150	150	149				447
	HOLDEN P. T.																150	149	148				448
	WYSON B. C.																150	149	148				448
	LICKMAN A. T.																150	146	145				441
	CARLSON B. E.																						
34	ARMSTRONG R.																150	150	148				448
	DIX E. A.																150	146	145				441
	MCURRIE P. T.																150	149	148				447
	FRASER M. T.																150	150	148				448
	LANGLEY P. B.																						
35	WAINLY D. P.																150	145	144				439
	FEENEY R. C. W.																150	146	145				441
	RICHARD J.																150	150	148				448
	MILLER R. H.																150	150	148				448
	EVANS M. T.																150	146	145				441
36	WATSON P. M.																150	150	149				449
	WATSON J. A.																150	150	148				448
	WAINWRIGHT P. B.																150	150	149				449
	WAINWRIGHT J. C.																150	149	148				447
TOTAL DAY 1:																	GRAND TOTAL		7137				

It has been a day of records; the first ever time that a range had even been shot clean, the first time that one team has one all three ranges in a day, in a addition to Jon Cload's remarkable perfect 450, the first ever fired in the Palma Match. Bring on day 2 tomorrow...