

28th August 2007

By This Correspondent

And so to Tuesday, and the first of the days on which we would shoot at all the long ranges: 800m first, 900m second and 700m last. It was also the first day on which we were (eventually) re-introduced to the concept of high scoring being rather difficult, now that we were onto the Palma targets, and to the severe volatility in score that depends on an individual's squadding times.

I say "eventually", because conditions first thing in the morning looked so easy that David Armstrong declared that anyone not scoring 150 in the first detail should be dropped from the Palma. Any good friend of his returning to the hut with a 149 won't have been pleased to hear that, but at least David went out and dropped a point himself in the following detail. 150s and 149s were, largely, the story of the morning. Only one squad got to fire its 900m detail before lunch and the GB scores were all in the 140s, mostly the high 140s, with Ross McQuillan managing 149.6 and match referee John Webster excelling with 448 for the first three range aggregate. Things were not to stay that way...

With only three (albeit 15-round, 40-minute) shoots per day as opposed to the previous week's four, there was plenty of time for team members to relax, catch up on sleep and reading, etc. An increasing number were seen strolling over to the NCRRA hut for the novelty of hot, Jenny's-style food, while others took part in the sudoku challenge (current champion = Matty) and looked at rival teams' brochures, including the American one with the insert, dated 20th August, sporting a letter from George W. Bush offering good luck to all the "athletes" participating in the championships...

On rolled the afternoon and the wind was starting to look substantially trickier. And so it proved. This correspondent was exasperated with his 138 until he discovered that substantially fewer points had been scored by far more illustrious team members than he. When the wind is varying from 2 right to 9 left, it pays to be able to read it, to shoot quickly before it changes and to avoid the extremes. So, "thank you" to the butt marker who pulled the target before this correspondent fired with 2 right on the gun, just as it was about to switch to 4 left! Range of scores seen during the second 900m detail was 110 to 143, with our largely in the top half of that but still serving as a warning that scoring on Palma targets at that range can be a nightmare.

The difficulty of the afternoon was clearly messing with people's minds. I can think of no other reason for DC to have gone down to the range for his 700m shoot without his rifle...

The 700m shoots were somewhat less taxing, although they still produced a contender for the teddy out of the pram, with one of the coaches going clean for 14 shots before scoring a 7 last to count with his sights having come loose. It remains to be seen whether that trumps Toby's lost toe-nail... not likely...

Scores are yet to be posted by the DCRA...