

BUGABOO BLAST



VIC THOMAS REPORTS FROM RADIUM HOT SPRINGS, BRITISH COLUMBIA

Bugaboo Blast was hosted by the Lake Windermere District Rod & Gun Club on August 28th-29th. It gets its name from the Bugaboo range of mountains a few miles north of the club. The event was held at the Rauch Homestead Range some 5km west of Radium Hot Springs (BC) in the scenic Columbia River Valley between the Purcell and Rocky Mountains.

The event featured 100 registered targets over 16 stations on Saturday morning, 120 registered targets over 18 stations on Saturday afternoon and 120 non-registered targets on Sunday. Rain during Saturday night took one automatic machine out of service on Sunday, resulting in a 17 station configuration. In addition to adding two shooting

stations for the Saturday afternoon course, a few shooting stations had minor re-configurations. The course design utilized 17 automatic machines, ten $\frac{3}{4}$ cock manual machines and several rabbit presentations using gravity machines. This allowed for a great variety of target presentations.

This was the first year a registered event has been held at the club. Attendance was disappointing due to a second registered competition which drew some shooters. In addition, the Canadian Nationals being held the following weekend discouraged attendance. Nevertheless, those who attended commented favourably on the course design, hospitality and shoot organization.

Sunny skies prevailed for the registered event on Saturday

which greatly improved target visibility, particularly on those targets presented in the timber and those where the target was presented against a background of evergreens.

Overall, the course encompassed a variety of terrain including open meadow, hill sides, a ravine, mature timber and scrub brush allowing many interesting target presentations from wide open targets, to fast targets with short windows, as well as several rabbit presentations.

Saturday Morning

Station 6 on the Saturday morning round proved to be the most difficult. The trap machine was located to the right rear of the shooter with a fast target thrown

through a natural clearing in the trees. From the shooter's perspective, this appeared as a right-to-left quartering away target in a short window. Adding to the challenge was the fact that the target was not visible off the throwing arm. The target complement was five singles, however the short window allowed only one shot at each target. Overall shooter success was 36 percent.

At the other end of the spectrum, overall shooter success rate was 83 percent on Saturday morning's station 13. In this case, the trap was located on a hill approximately 100 ft above and to the rear of the shooter. The target appeared briefly over tall trees and as its forward momentum was almost depleted, it began to drop rapidly. The opportunity window was again short as the target soon dropped below the tree tops. Target format was again five singles. Although the target appeared fairly difficult, success rate was high.

Station 11 on Saturday morning featured a gravity rabbit presentation, approximately 10 yards out with the shooter needing to follow the downhill contour of the target. While looking deceptively easy, several shooters blanked this station in spite of having time to shoot twice – only two shooters managed to run this station!

When the morning scores were tallied, Master level shooter Cory McConnell topped the field at 80 percent, Vic Vickers, also Master level, was second at 79 percent and Wyatt Mehrer, C class, was third at 76 percent.

Saturday Afternoon

A fast, right-to-left following pair, crossing perpendicular to the #8 shooting station in a narrow window on Saturday afternoon gave shooters the most trouble, even though the target was essentially visible for the whole flight as soon as it came off the throwing arm. Only one shooter ran this station, with several drawing blanks.

Shooter success was highest on Station #6 which consisted of a fast overhead target much like the low house target in skeet with a right-to-left battue breaking at the 10 o'clock position 20 yards in front of the shooter.

A presentation called Quick Quad Quail was used on Station #4. The presentation is so named as the targets are fast, there are 4 of

them and the targets are midis. The sequence begins with a following pair separated by about 1.5 seconds, a 5 second interval to reload and a second following pair. While there were several looks of disbelief during the "show-me" sequence, most shooters did well – as long as they didn't rush the reload sequence.

Bob Braid, an A level shooter, topped the field on Saturday afternoon with 74 percent, Wyatt Mehrer came in with 73 percent and Cory McConnell at 69 percent.

At the end of the day, Wyatt Mehrer (who incidentally shoots with a pump gun) topped the field with an average of 74.5 percent, one target ahead of Cory McConnell with 74.1 percent and Vic Vickers four targets off the pace at 72.3 percent.

Overall, while targets were a bit on the 'stiff' side, most shooters enjoyed the challenge and the variety of target presentations. No doubt, this event will be on the 'must attend' list for many of those who missed the event this year. ■



GREAT TERRAIN!