

Is anyone listening?



CHRISTMAS HAS BEEN AND GONE AND THOUGHTS TURN TO THE NEW SPORTING CLAYS SEASON. IF YOUR PERSONAL PERFORMANCE THIS YEAR ISN'T UP TO YOUR EXPECTATIONS, DON'T RELY ON EXCUSES OR START COMPLAINING – NO ONE IS LISTENING!

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How many times have you driven home from your club – or a major tournament – telling your shooting companions about the targets you

should not have missed that would have seen you win your class or take HOA? How many times have you shot a tough course, dumped numerous targets on the first few stations and given up – only to find you missed your class win by one target?

How many times have you finished a round believing that you've shot above your usual standard only to find you're not placed in the top five of your class? When asked how you performed on a tricky low scoring FITASC layout why do you say "I went on to my last peg for 23" – when your final score was 20!

We've all been there and whatever the scenario there's always an excuse – the weather, targets that are too easy or too hard, eye sight tests, no bird, battues that didn't turn, distractions and plenty more to excuse the fact that we didn't perform to our personal expectations.

Very quickly, such excuses can become complaining – nothing is our fault. Those that complain had better quickly learn that two thirds of the people you complain to (or give excuses to) don't care and the other third are relieved it happened to you and not them!

The hard fact of life is that a target is a target under any conditions and your score is relative to the course you've shot and your own personal ability. The only excuse for underperforming is you. Shooters miss targets because of not 'reading' the target angle or speed correctly, poor technique or loss of focus that invariably results in the incorrect lead (or line) for that target – rarely,

if ever, does a shooter intentionally miss just for the hell of it!

A miss is the personal breakdown of the fundamentals that should have resulted in breaking the target. And that's why the evaluation of your technique and practice during the off-season is so very important to future success – regardless of your class.

Elsewhere in this issue Lanny Bassham completes his two part article on preparing (mental and physical) for this year's competition season. Part I in November looked at the 'Reflection' and 'Evaluation' periods of last season and in this issue he studies the phases of 'Conditioning' and 'Competition'. His advice will be taken on board by many – and you'll no doubt meet those winners next year.

But there are plenty of shooters not driven by future competition results that will be taking a well earned break over the next few months. If you plan such a break, then Alan Rhone has some good tips in this issue on how to maintain your enthusiasm for the sport and how to look after and store your firearm.

Perhaps this is the time to evaluate your choice of shotshell before bulk ordering for the coming season. Tim Woodhouse uses his article this month to evaluate the effect of temperature and altitude on velocity and shell performance while Larry Nailon looks at shot quality on shotgun performance – particularly at longer distances.

Over the winter months, regular correspondent, Steve Fischer, has written up his visits to

Browning in Arnold (just outside St Louis) and Nu-Line Guns in Rhineland (MO) – where he found a gold-mine of obsolete gun parts.

Tom Ceretto completes gun tests on the Krieghoff K20 and the Remington STS over and under, Cathy Gascoigne gives the guys some tips on how to encourage partners and wives to come shooting, and Tom Thompson sets the record straight on the Lewis Class. It's another packed issue of news, advice, reviews, technical articles and instruction. Enjoy – and best wishes for the New Year.

DATE CHANGE

As part of this magazine's drive to increase its readership outside of the NSCA membership, ClayShootingUSA is now on sale through Barnes and Noble, Borders, Hastings and the Hudson News Group. The magazine will continue to be published six times a year but the magazine cover dates have now changed to improve book store shelf life. As an example, our next issue will be published in March and as usual despatched to subscribers by the 15th of that month but the magazine will be dated April/May.

Attaining distribution through book stores is not a given. We have worked hard for three years to produce a technical but very readable sporting clays magazine that is of the highest production standard to rank alongside other sports magazines on the book shelves. I'm confident that this move will be nothing but good for the promotion of the sport. ■