

Motivation is the key

DESIRE, DETERMINATION AND MOTIVATION IS WHAT'S NEEDED TO MAKE SURE YOU SHOOT BETTER THAN YOUR ABILITY LEVEL SAYS YOU SHOULD. IT'S ALSO NEEDED TO MAKE SURE YOU PRACTICE AND IMPROVE YOUR SKILLS DURING THE OFF-SEASON SAYS MICHAEL BRUNTON

A large dose of motivation is a basic requirement if you want any success in this game. Determination can be gained from the things you can control – so ignore those things that you can't control. Desire comes from the enjoyment of participating with fulfillment and achievement being the rewards. But motivation is the key to success – particularly when it comes to improving your skills by planning and executing a rigorous practice regime in the off-season.

If you are to be successful, at whatever level you choose, now is the time of the year when you should be absorbing the lessons from the previous season, planning your goals for 2005 and instigating a practice routine to achieve those goals.

Honest analysis of your performance last season should have helped you identify areas of technical weakness. This feedback element is vital to constructive current and future practice.

Concentrated work on practice targets will pay dividends but you must practice with a purpose – just blasting away at hundreds of targets is of little use. Bad habits can be practiced just as easily as good habits! This is the time when a professional coach can be of most use, particularly if you have thought through your aims before you consult him or her. You may have a general technical problem (inconsistent gun mount for example) or a problem target.

Either way, even just an hour or two with a coach can make all the difference. If you practice without a coach, try to do so in a group. Together you can provide each other with feedback and help to ensure that you do not regress into those bad old habits.

With very little competition available to keep you sharp, now's the time to use visualization techniques, or develop a program to build up and maintain your powers of concentration – something you can do any time, anywhere. Why not combine visualization with dry mounting routines at home. This is important both as physical and technical training. Prevent aimless activity and give everything a place and a



purpose. It's not that long until the season kicks off with the Seminole Cup in February – and prior preparation is the only way to prevent poor performance! Enjoy your break and good shooting next year!

GREAT NEWS

Elsewhere in this issue is news about a new World Series – the Sporting Triple Classic. The three event series of sporting clays 'Festivals' will take place in June in England, September in Moscow, Russia, and in the USA during the spring of 2006. It's a major undertaking and represents a massive investment to improve the

'international' standing of the sport we all enjoy. Top quality competition, subsidized entry fees, fantastic prize funds throughout the classes and bonus prizes for those that participate in all three 'Festivals' is deserving of your support. Make next year special – and plan now to join the world's biggest ever sporting clays party!

GOOD CHEER

All that remains, as I write this column just prior to Christmas, is to thank you all for your continued support in 2004 and wish you and your families all the very best of good fortune this New Year. ■