Spring 2012 Edition:

MRRA Spring Membership and Board Meetings
The Spring MRRA Membership and Board Meetings is scheduled for Saturday, March 03, 2012 at the Gander Mountain Store located in Forest Lake MN. The Membership meeting will start at 12:30PM. The Board meeting is scheduled to start at 10:00AM same date & location. All members are welcome to attend.

Minnesota Shooter Profile -- Emmet (Doc) Swanson
Submitted by: Lance Swanson, Irv Lerner and Erhard Bruderer

For anyone interested in target rifle shooting, from the late 1940’s to the early 1960’s the names Sandager and Swanson held precisely the same status that Ruth and Gehrig did to a baseball aficionado. Close friends Robert (Sandy) Sandager and Emmet (Doc) Swanson were superstars, two of the finest rifle marksmen in the U.S. and among the best in the world. It was in large measure on their account that Minnesota was well known as one of the nation’s epicenters for target rifle shooting.

Doc Swanson began competitive shooting in the 20’s and by 1930 had won a world smallbore kneeling championship. He participated on his first International team in Brussels in 1930 and thereafter was on U.S. national teams which competed in Caracas, Oslo, Helsinki and Buenos Aires including the Olympics of 1948 and 1952. In 1956 and 1960 he served as the U.S. Olympic team captain. Doc was one of the elite few to have achieved Distinguished status in centerfire rifle, pistol and international categories with most of his international competition being in 300 meter rifle. Over the course of his considerable shooting career Doc won innumerable civilian and military, state and national, individual and team championships. Doc was a member of the Marine Reserves for many years and competed on Marine teams throughout the country and especially at Camp Perry. After his active competitive years he served as the Marine reserve rifle team coach for many years.

In addition to his outstanding personal shooting career, Doc was a devoted supporter of the sport in a myriad of ways. Along with Sandy he was one of the core supporters of the Minneapolis Rifle Club (MRC). Together with a few other MRC members, they bought the land for a new shooting range in Andover when the Fort Snelling range was shut down because a stray .30 caliber rifle bullet hit the leg of a traveler in the Minneapolis Airport Terminal! Doc, together with Sandy, led many MRC teams to victory and established in the process new national records. They also participated in an active winter schedule where they shot weekly at 50 feet in the basement of the old ROTC building at the University of Minnesota until it was shut down due to lead contamination. On the local shooting scene Doc was always available for advice and mentoring. He also commanded national respect in the shooting world and served on the National Rifle Association Board of Directors and then as its President from 1947-48 at a time when the organization’s focus was on the shooting sports and marksmanship.

Before the outbreak of World War II Doc was a reservist for the Army Dental Corps. However, the Marine Corps lured him away to compete for their shooting team. His first major assignment was to be commanding officer of the Marine Corps ordnance school at Quantico, Virginia. When the war in the Pacific intensified Doc was transferred there. He was involved in the planning of the assault of Iwo Jima, landed on the island on the first day of that epic battle and ultimately served on the island for 28 days. For his role in the battle he was awarded the bronze star. Following his active service he continued in the Marine Reserves where he was promoted to Colonel at which rank he retired in 1966, two years before his death.

For all of those accomplishments Doc Swanson was a modest, approachable man, a successful dentist, father, husband, and club member; in short he was a great guy.

Doc Swanson at the 1960 Olympics, Rome Italy
2012 MRRA Meeting Schedule

MARCH 3, 2012 - 10:00 AM Board Meeting, Gander Mountain, Forest Lake, MN
MARCH 3, 2012 - 12:30 PM Membership Meeting, Gander Mountain, Forest Lake, MN
JUNE 9, 2012 – 3:00PM Board Meeting, Gopher Gun Club, Harris, MN
SEPTEMBER 8, 2012 – 3:00 PM Board Meeting, Northwest Gun Club, Duluth, MN
DECEMBER 1, 2012 - 10:00 AM Board Meeting, Gander Mountain, Forest Lake, MN
DECEMBER 1, 2012 - 12:30 PM Membership Meeting, Gander Mountain, Forest Lake, MN

Members are welcome to attend all Board meetings.

2012 Minnesota Smallbore Prone Aggregate Championship to Kick-off with May 20th MRC Conventional 1600 – Chad Danielson MRRA Jr. Chair

The Sunday May 20th MRC Conventional 1600 Prone tournament is the first Smallbore prone match that goes towards the Minnesota Aggregate Prone Title. Any shooters that show and shoot the tournament will have their score recorded for points towards the cumulative title at the end of the summer season. Actual tournament score will be used to accumulate points towards the title. For example a shooter who shoots a 1586 will have 1586 points towards the championship. Whatever smallbore prone tournament that shooter was to shoot next will then be added to his or her total. At the end of the season the shooter who has accumulated the most tournament points will be declared the 2012 Minnesota Smallbore Prone Aggregate Champion. This was set up with the idea of promoting continued growth of our local Smallbore Shooting matches throughout the summer. Also this system doesn’t necessarily mean the best shooter will end up, as end of the season champion, the shooter most dedicated to attending matches possibly will have the highest accumulated points total at the end, as the more of the 8 scheduled Smallbore prone matches you attend the more points you will accumulate. There will be an overall end of the season plaque, and a junior category plaque to be awarded at the end of the summer.

The following Smallbore Prone Tournaments will be the tournament shooters earn points from shooting.

May 20, - 1600 Minneapolis Rifle Club
May 26 & 27, - 3200 Conv. N.R.A. Regional, Minneapolis Rifle Club
June 17 - 1600 Minneapolis Rifle Club
July 15 - 1600 Minneapolis Rifle Club
Aug. 4 & 5 – 3200 Metric N.R.A. Regional, Minneapolis Rifle Club
Aug. 19 – 1600 Minneapolis Rifle Club
Aug. 25 & 26 – 3200 Minnesota State Championship ,Hibbing Rifle Club
Sept. 16 – 1600 Elk River Sportsman’s Club

Highpower Report -- Mark Rohmann – MRRA Highpower Rifle Chairman

Last February, Phil Kladerud & Matt Griffin contracted a severe case of cabin fever. Rather than wait for another highpower season to start, they packed their gear and headed to Phoenix, to shoot the Southwest Berger Long-Range nationals. Arizona is a hotbed of top flight shooting and a match sponsored by Berger bullets was sure to attract some of the nation’s best.

The 2011 Southwest Berger Long-Range nationals was a great time. I enjoyed meeting and shooting with Palma team members, and was able to pick up a lot of good shooting tips, such as the importance of how to watch for and identify significant mirage changes. To mingle with and learn from top-ranked Palma shooters makes this national match well worth attending. - Phil Klanderud

For the rest of us, the season started on a clear March day at the Northwestern Gun Club. Kevin Bangen continued his winning streak, collecting the Offhand State Trophy. A few days later, Matt Griffin turned in the top performance at the 300 meter International Prone match. This was Matt’s last hurrah before his deployment to Iraq. (He returned in late Oct, safe and sound.)
Steve Erickson bested the field at the OTC Championship. He also won 3 of the four individual matches. This is Steve’s 6th time at the top of the list, tying Robert “Sandy” Sandager for 2nd highest number of wins. Dr. Ken Erickson (notice the last name!) stands alone with 8 titles.

Junior Eric Hazelton had a breakout season. He won the 300M Prone, 300m 3-P, Long-Range & Mid-Range Jr titles. His father Chris did such a fine job coaching that Dad’s now the 2nd best shooter in the family. Well done Eric!

The MN Service Rifle team took a full crew to the National Matches at Camp Perry, Ohio. The team of Kurt Borlaug (Captain), Larry Weidel (Coach), Tom Torborg, Terry McDonnell, Kurt Moline, Tim Boyle, Mark Schoess & Dean Gillette placed 30th in the team match and 18th in the “rattle battle”.

A week later, Kevin Bangen, Eric Rhode & Mark Rohmann teamed with a friend from MI to win the Match Rifle - Master Class of the Rumboldt Match.

Congratulations to James Pennington, who earned his Distinguished Rifleman Badge at Camp Perry.

Other notable events included Minnesota’s first Fullbore match (timed pair firing @ 300, 600, 800 & 1000 yards) and Minneapolis Rifle Club hosting its first OTC match in 10 years.

2011 MN State Champions are:

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<th>Event</th>
<th>Champion(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Offhand</td>
<td>Kevin Bangen &amp; Dale Wickstrom (Sr)</td>
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<tr>
<td>300M</td>
<td>Matt Griffin &amp; Eric Hazelton (Jr)</td>
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<tr>
<td>300M 3-Position</td>
<td>Erhardt Bruderer &amp; Eric Hazelton (Jr)</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTC</td>
<td>Steve Erickson, Jim Biles (Sr) &amp; Omer Hamer (Gr Sr)</td>
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<td>OTC Team</td>
<td>Northstar Rifle Club (Peasley, Bangen, Rhode &amp; Erickson)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-Range</td>
<td>Steve Knutson, Elliott Zunich (Sr), Omer Hamer (Gr Sr) &amp; Eric Hazelton (Jr)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service Rifle</td>
<td>Phil Klanderud</td>
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<td>Service Rifle Team</td>
<td>MRRA Blue (Weidel &amp; Pennington)</td>
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<td>Palma</td>
<td>Jay Johnson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Long Range</td>
<td>Jay Johnson &amp; Eric Hazelton (Jr)</td>
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Congratulations to all Champions. Thank You to everyone who ran a match, called a firing line, kept statistics, filled in a scoring position, pulled pit duty, squeezed a trigger or coached a new shooter. I look forward to shooting with all of you in 2012.

Elk River Sportsman’s Club Spring Wind Clinic and Mid-Range Match – Scott Olson MRRA F-Class Chair

The Elk River Sportsman’s Club is proud to host this fantastic event. The event will consist of a wind reading/shooting clinic followed by a delicious lunch. After the lunch, (2) 20 shot matches will be fired at the 600 yard line of the club’s KD Range. These matches will be 2 shooter/team events with the intent of practicing your wind reading skills by coaching your teammate. The instructors will be Steve Knutson and Rick Hunt, both coaches for the US National F-Class Team. This is a rare chance to learn from the best coaches in the country! The match will continue on the second day with NRA Approved (4) 20 shot matches at 600 yards. The match bulletin and further information is on mrra.org

2012 MN Junior Olympic Championship: - Chad Danielson, MRRA Jr. Chair

2012 State Junior Olympic Rifle Championships held in Mendota Heights MN January 21st, and 22nd saw 46 competitors shoot the Air Rifle Championship, and 26 competitors shoot the Smallbore Rifle Championship.

In the Air Rifle Competition Men shoot 6 targets in the standing position and the women shoot 4 targets. Giving men a possible 600, and women a possible 400, although the overall standings are tabulated using a percentage value. The Air Rifle Championship saw Allie Taschuk place 1st overall with 388 / 400 with 97.00% also giving her the Women’s Gold.
The Women’s Silver was taken by Samantha Peterson with 367 points for 91.75%, placing her 4th overall. Women’s Bronze went to Carmen Fry also with 367 points and 91.75%, but had one less center shot than Peterson which separated the two.

The Men’s Gold went to Patrick Sunderman shooting a 576 / 600 for 96.00% and placing him 2nd overall. Men’s Silver was won by Scott Chester with 569 points for 94.83%. Men’s Bronze went to Curtis Haglin shooting 547 points for 91.17%.

The 3 Position Smallbore Competition all competitors shoot 20 record shots in Prone, Standing, and Kneeling. The day of smallbore shooting saw Patrick Sunderman post a score of 563 out of 600 for the top spot, and Men’s Gold. Men’s Silver went to Scott Chester posting a 536 for a 5th overall, with Bronze going to Sam Ewert who put up a 529 and a 6th overall finish. Allie Taschuk was the top women’s shooter in smallbore putting up a 550 for second overall, followed by Carmen Fry with a 539 for the Women’s Silver and 4th overall. Taking the Women’s Bronze saw Samantha Peterson with a 513 finishing her 9th overall.

Congratulations need to go out to Minnesota Junior Shooters Allie Taschuk, Patrick Sunderman, Scott Chester, Samantha Peterson, and Elizabeth Ewert who all received 1st round invites in Air Rifle to the 2012 Nationals Junior Olympic Rifle Championships held in April at the United States Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, CO. Invitations are determined by shooting at or above a certain cutoff score determined by USA Shooting.

Additional congratulations to Allie Taschuk and Patrick Sunderman who also received 1st round invitations to the Nationals in the Smallbore discipline.

A second round of invites are usually released after a certain cutoff date for 1st round shooters to accept or turn down their 1st round invite. After 1st round invites it appears Minnesota could be well represented in April at this years 2012 National Junior Olympic Rifle Championships.

**The Top Three Mistakes Beginning Prone Shooters Make -- by Larry Sawyer**

In the last two articles I covered the standing position in some detail. For many people, that may have been just too far advanced relative to the type of target shooting that they do. So now, we’ll go back to the beginning, to where almost everyone starts: the Prone position. If you are new to the game, or coming to sling-type shooting from F-class, or are just not getting the results you wanted to see before moving to the next position from prone, then this article is for you.

It’s natural to assume that prone should be easy. The shooter is lying on the ground, both elbows firmly planted, and it certainly looks like the gun isn’t moving. Compared with standing, it’s not.

The problem is, we have an expectation of hitting the target center with very high frequency, regardless of how much practice has taken place. *It shouldn’t be that hard.* In addition, there’s almost always someone at a match who does hit the ten every time. A competitor looks over at the person leading the match, sees a prone position which he THINKS looks like his, and says “But I am doing what he’s doing. Why is my score so much lower?”

There was a time, well into my adult years, when I was losing many points in prone matches, even while I could hold my own very nicely in standing and kneeling. I had been shooting for years and years and I was very frustrated. I decided that I had to dedicate myself to solving the problem, and I then spent a few years really studying the position, asking lots of questions of the top shooters I met at matches, and trying many ideas, position changes, and gadgets. (I can report to you that buying gadgets is more fun than working at something!) Over the course of just a few years, I went from never finishing higher than third or fourth in a local match, to being consistently in the top 10% (or higher) at the Prone matches at Camp Perry. Just a few years ago, I set a new state record in prone (3198/3200), made it on to the U.S. Dewar Team at Perry three times, and for part of one year anyway,
I was ranked #8 in the country in men’s prone by USA Shooting. (Ha... that didn’t last!) I racked up numerous 50 Meter international match prone scores in the 592-595 range as well. I am by no means claiming to be the best prone shooter around, (there’s always someone better) but I came away from my journey having learned many things, and really understanding the difference between decent prone technique, and really superb prone technique.

In this article, I will lay out the biggest mistakes that I think shooters make when approaching the position. This is my Top-10 List, condensed into just three to keep it very digestible. Here we go!

#3: A Position That is Too Low.
A too-low position is the first thing most beginning shooters experience, because when the sling is first attached to the arm and clipped to the rifle, the natural inclination is to make it comfortable, and that means, not too tight on the arm, nor too tight in the shoulder. The result is a position that feels pretty good, but offers no structural support, and thus collapses quickly. It collapses downward, with the sling sliding down the arm, and the stock coming out of the shoulder. But it’s comfortable! Look at this, it’s resting right on the inside of my elbow! I can shoot this! No, you can’t. It’s illegal under ISSF rules for one thing. International rules require a 30 degree angle measured from the surface of the floor to the forearm supporting the rifle. Second, the lower you go, the more you end up looking out of the top of the eye socket, which fatigues your eye muscles very quickly, and makes your neck sore as well. The equivalent situation would be looking straight up at the sky while standing up. Your neck is going to get sore in a hurry.

Solution: Use a high-quality sling with aggressive rubber on the cuff, and a clip to hold it in place on your arm. The clip is permanently fastened to the shoulder area of the jacket and holds the sling in suspension. Fasten the sling just above the bicep. A higher position also keeps your lungs and diaphragm off the floor and allows easy breathing. Now you can breathe easily, and see for far longer without eye fatigue.

(Side note: Some will argue that a really low position, where allowed, as in NRA events, is better. I disagree. As evidenced by scores alone, the world’s best prone shooters score 598-600 consistently, and that’s with legal, 30 degree high positions. And they do it on the hardest targets that exist, which are the international 300 meter and 50 meter targets. By extension then, if you can shoot a perfect score on the hardest possible target with a higher position, then I think it’s safe to assume that the position is contributing to your success.)

#2: Ignoring Natural Point of Aim.
If you build a solid, tight position, the gun will really only want to point at one spot. That one spot is your Natural Point of Aim. If that spot is not on the center of the target and you have to push or influence the front sight to the bull, you will not shoot tens.

Solution: Here is what you should see. Breathe in, and the muzzle drops. Breathe out, and it rises. It is critically important to set up your position so that when you exhale naturally, the sight comes up from 6:00 into the center of the bull. The Center. Not just a little above. Not below center. THE CENTER. Use your buttplate settings, or where you seat it in your shoulder to adjust elevation. For left-to-right alignment, use your support arm elbow as the pivot point and move your entire body left, or right, to align your Natural Point of Aim to the center of the bull. Do NOT use breath volume to control elevation. It’s not consistent enough.

If all you did was address these first two items, you could go pretty far and probably make big gains with your score. But we’re not done. We still have to address the worst sin you can commit, which is...

#1: Insufficient Buttplate-to-Shoulder Pressure!
Not enough pressure from the buttplate in the shoulder allows the buttplate to be placed inconsistently in the shoulder from shot to shot, and it allows the butt to move while aiming. In a worst-case scenario, it actually moves just from squeezing the trigger.

Solution: Lengthen your stock by moving the buttplate out, or drive the gun backward by moving your handstop forward. (Which method makes more sense for you depends on too many variables to address here, but sometimes either one is okay.)

Next, gauge the pressure you feel in your shoulder. Here’s how I like to describe the “right” amount of pressure. If you go to seat the buttplate in your shoulder and you can’t even get it there, then the stock is too long and there is, in fact, too much pressure.
But if you seat the buttplate, and bring your elbow to the floor, and you lay there and think, “Boy, this is really tight, I’m not sure I can shoot this” then it’s just about right!

What you may have at this point is a very high position. You will feel very significant shoulder pressure. Try shooting it. If your mental focus strays from the shot process, back to the shoulder pressure, then bring the buttplate in just a little. (Or move your handstop back.) Take it in just a little at a time until it’s no longer distracting. BUT— under no circumstances should it ever be so loose that you can move the stock in your shoulder while your anchor elbow (right elbow for a right-handed shooter) is on the floor. If you can move the buttplate from your shoulder with your elbow on the floor, it is WAY too loose.

If you address these three things, your scores should go up. If they don’t, you might need some one-on-one help to trouble shoot why you’re not hitting the center. Good luck with your new position!

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MEMBERSHIP FEES:

[ ] One Year $15.00  [ ] 5 Years $60.00  [ ] Life Membership $350.00

Memberships expire on December 31st. Memberships started late in the year will expire on Dec 31st of the following year.

I authorize the MRRA to provide my contact information to MRRA affiliated clubs. I certify that I am not now, nor have I ever been a member of any organization which advocates the overthrow of the government of the United States by force or violence. I further certify that I have never been convicted of a felony, crime of violence or misdemeanor domestic violence, and that I am not otherwise prohibited from owning firearms. If accepted as a member of the Minnesota Rifle and Revolver Association, I pledge to practice good sportsmanship, support the MRRA, and uphold the Constitution of the United States and the Second Amendment.

Signature: ___________________________________________ Date: ________________________
Your Membership Expires on this date:

TO: