

## LESSON 10: COMPETITION OPPORTUNITIES

### PURPOSE

This lesson teaches how to complete a competition course of fire and introduces cadets to the excitement and challenge of competition shooting.



*competition  
final  
self control*

### INTRODUCTION

Many cadets take rifle marksmanship instruction to learn about another sport and how to practice it. Many others take rifle marksmanship because they are interested in **competition** target shooting. Trying to become a member of the school rifle team is challenging and exciting to many cadets. This **final** lesson in the *JROTC Rifle Marksmanship Student Text* is for those who want to “go for it” and try competition shooting. It informs you about opportunities that are available to you in the sport of target rifle shooting.

This chapter first introduces the official competition target that is used in JROTC, school and other three-position air rifle competitions, as well as in all major air rifle competitions around the world. You will learn about finals that now conclude most major target competitions, from important junior competitions to the Olympic Games. The lesson ends with a review of the different

competition activities that you can participate in, as a member of a JROTC rifle team.

### THE COMPETITION EVENT

One big change between the 3x10 practice events that you have fired on the BMC target and regular 3x10 competition events, is the target. The official competition target has a tiny dot for a ten ring and all of its scoring rings from the 1-ring to the 10-ring are slightly smaller than the eight ring on the BMC target.

If you learned and practiced the basics of rifle marksmanship taught in the JROTC rifle marksmanship course, you are probably ready, or with a little more practice soon will be ready, to graduate from the BMC target to the official competition target. If you are able to keep your shots inside the 8-ring on the BMC target, you will now be able to keep your shots inside the scoring rings on the more difficult official target.

When firing a 3x10 or 3x20 competition event on the new target, there also is a difference in how the targets are configured. The competition targets are printed so that there are two sighting targets and ten record targets on one target card. Even after a few months of practice, shooters’ skills become good enough that when five shots are fired on one target, the shots often are so close together, it is not possible to score them accurately. For this reason, competition shooters fire only one record shot on each competition target.

Many basic marksmanship courses end with everyone shooting a 3x10 course of fire on these competition targets. Cadets who join the rifle team will do all of their practice and competition on this target.



*The 8-9-10 rings of the BMC target.*



*The official 10 m air rifle competition target.  
The 10-ring is a 0.5 mm dot and the one ring is 45.0 mm in diameter.*



*Sporter air rifle finalists in the Junior Olympic National Championship prepare to fire one of their final round shots. The top eight shooters advance to the final. Finalists fire ten additional shots together, one-shot-at-a-time. Final round scores are added to the shooters' scores in the regular competition.*

## FINALS

If you become a rifle team member and your team attends major three-position competitions, you will probably go to an event where a **final** is fired. Even if you do not go to a competition with a final, the final system can be used for shooting games on your home range that are really fun. Finals are a relatively new and very exciting way to conclude target shooting competitions. Here are some important facts about finals.

- Shooting finals were first used in the 1988 Olympic Games. Finals are now used in almost all important target shooting competitions, including many competitions for high school teams.
- To advance to a final, a competitor must complete the first round of a competition and finish in the top eight. The eight shooters with the highest 3x20 scores qualify for the final. In some competitions, all shooters may be invited to shoot the final.
- In three-position events, the final is always fired in the standing position. All eight shooters in a final, shoot together on adjacent firing points. The shooter who finishes the first round in first place takes the number one position on the left. The shooter in eighth place takes the number eight position on the right.
- Finals start with a three-minute preparation period. A seven-minute sighting (practice and warm-up) period follows. Then finalists fire 10 shots for record, one-shot-at-a-time.

- To start each final round shot, the range officer uses the commands: FOR YOUR NEXT SHOT, LOAD, (pause), ATTENTION—3-2-1-START. Finalists have 75 seconds to fire one shot.
- After all eight finalists fire one shot, scores for that shot are announced. When electronic targets or special scoring equipment are available, final round shots are scored in tenth-ring values. A perfect center ten counts 10.9 points, while a ten that just touches the 10 dot scores 10.0 points. The range officer announces the eight shooters' scores after each shot ("Shooter one, 10.2; Shooter two, 8.7; Shooter three, 9.9; etc.").
- In many smaller competitions where special scoring equipment is not available, finals are still held, but scoring is done in whole numbers. When paper targets are used, the range officer can use a telescope to estimate and announce the shot values ("Shooter one, 9; Shooter two, 7, Shooter three, 10, etc."). The targets can then be "officially" scored immediately after the ten shots are completed so that final results can be announced.
- Spectators are encouraged to watch finals. Cheering before and after each shot is common and encouraged. At the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, there were 2,500 spectators in a grandstand behind the finalists. In addition, a live television signal of the shooting finals was broadcast to as many as two billion people around the world.

- Each finalist's final score is the total of the first round (3x10 or 3x20 shots) plus the final round score.
- Final scores are counted in individual rankings. Final scores are not counted in team scores or rankings.



*Men's air rifle finalists at a 2000 Pre-Olympic test competition in Sydney. The targets on this range are electronic. Note the scoreboards and monitors above each shooter and the electronic scoreboard on the left.*

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## COMPETITION OPPORTUNITIES FOR JROTC RIFLE TEAMS

Cadets who are interested in target rifle shooting as a sport and who become members of their JROTC or school rifle team have many special competition opportunities. Competitions are a great way to measure your skills and progress as a shooter. They are always exciting, challenging experiences where you learn to control yourself and do your very best under pressure. They also offer opportunities to travel and meet new friends. Competition opportunities available to you include:

- **JROTC or School Rifle Team.** If your school has a JROTC rifle team or the school rifle team, your instructor will provide information about that program. Team members have a chance to practice regularly during the rifle season and to participate in competitions scheduled for the team.



*The instructor (front center) and members of a high school JROTC rifle team pose with a trophy they won in a major high school air rifle invitational competition.*

- **Postal Competitions.** In postal competitions, participating teams schedule matches where each team fires their score at their home range. Competing teams exchange scores by email, fax or phone to determine who won. The Army, Navy and Marine Corps JROTC programs all have national postal competitions that all JROTC units are encouraged to fire. The National Guard Bureau and American Legion sponsor two of the most popular national postals. To learn more about national postal competitions available to JROTC rifle teams, check the CMP web site at <http://www.odcmp.com/>.
- **League Competition.** In many areas of the country, school or JROTC teams organize leagues where they compete against each other in shoulder-to-shoulder competitions. Won-lost records usually determine league standings. There are many JROTC or high school leagues in the United States. The largest and most active high school league is in Georgia where the Georgia High School Association recognizes rifle as a varsity sport. To learn more about this rifle program where participating schools compete in regional leagues, check this Web site: <http://www.ghsa.net/riflery-assn.htm>
- **Major School Age Competitions.** There are a growing number of major **competitions** for school and JROTC rifle teams. A program goal of many JROTC or school teams is to do well in one or of these major tournaments. They include:
  - **State high school championships.** In addition to the Georgia program, there are now several other states that have state high school or JROTC rifle championships.
  - **State Junior Olympic championships.** Almost every state now has a state qualifying competition for the National Junior Olympic Championship in the winter or early spring. Many states organize their qualifiers in three or four different sections so that travel distances are not great and as many teams as possible can participate. Check the USA Shooting Web site for a listing of state qualifying competitions: [www.usashooting.com/Youth/threepair.cfm](http://www.usashooting.com/Youth/threepair.cfm)
  - **CMP Cup Matches.** These are large regional high school competitions where participants come from several states. CMP Cup Matches have sporter and precision class individual and team events and offer an opportunity to earn credit points for Junior Distinguished Badge awards. For a list of these matches, check the CMP Web site: [www.odemp.com/Services/Programs/3P.htm](http://www.odemp.com/Services/Programs/3P.htm)



*The winning teams in the 2000 National Junior Olympic Three-Position Air Rifle Championship. The top three teams were all high school JROTC teams from Hawaii, California and Georgia.*

- National Recognition Opportunities.** When school age rifle teams participate in major competitions, they become eligible to earn many special awards. Some of the most important awards are the Junior EIC badges and Distinguished Badges that are offered by the National Three-Position Air Rifle Council. Individual shooters who participate in Junior Olympic State and National Three-Position Air Rifle Championships can earn credit points for EIC badges and the prestigious Junior Distinguished Badge that are shown here. Distinguished Badges usually are awarded in special ceremonies.

There also are National Records for three-position air rifle shooting, including separate record categories for Army, Navy, and Marine Corps JROTC competitors. Check this Web site for information about the EIC and Junior Distinguished Badge program or to see the list of current national records: <http://www.odcmp.com/3P/Records.htm>.

The most comprehensive summary of all of the competition opportunities available in target shooting appears in the *Youth Shooting Opportunities Guide* that is published by the CMP. If your unit does not have a copy, the guide may be downloaded and printed from the CMP Web site at: <http://www.odcmp.com/Forms/ysog2002.pdf>.



*Junior bronze and silver EIC badges*

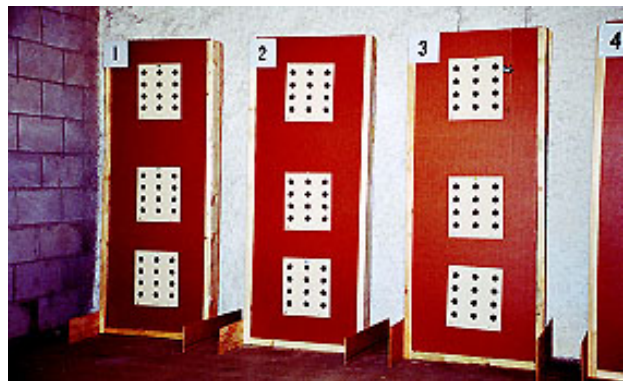


*The prestigious Junior Distinguished Badge. The badge is awarded when a school age competitor earns 30 points in designated competitions.*

## TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL COMPETITION OPPORTUNITIES

Most basic marksmanship instruction concludes with class participants firing a 3x10 event on the official air rifle targets under competition conditions (time limits, etc.). If you have a chance to fire a practice competition like that or if you go on to compete as a member of your rifle team, here are a few tips to remember that will help you do your best in the competition.

- **Firing point assignments.** In formal competitions, you will normally be assigned to a specific relay and firing point. Find out when and where you are scheduled to fire and be there well in advance so you can be prepared.
- **Be ready!** When the instructor or range officer calls you to the firing line for each position, set up your equipment and get into that position. Be sure to align the position on your sighter target and dry fire a few shots to warm up.
- **Keep your rifle zeroed.** After the commands LOAD, START are given, fire a few sighting shots and check to be sure your shot group is centered. Make sight adjustments if necessary. At any time during a competition that your shot group is not centered, adjust your sights to keep your rifle zeroed.
- **Remember your shot plan.** Consciously follow your shot plan for each sighting and record shots that you fire. If you are doing well, do not count up your possible score—just keep following the shot plan for each succeeding shot. If you have a poor shot, forget about it and remind yourself to just follow your shot plan to try to fire a good shot on the next shot.
- **Excitement is normal.** Everyone, including the greatest champions, become excited and nervous during competitions. Enjoy the feelings of heightened awareness that come from competition. Keep your mind focused on following your shot plan for each shot. Being excited can actually help you do even better if you learn to **control** your excitement.
- **Use your time wisely.** It is a good idea to keep a watch or timer in view so you can pace yourself and make sure you do not run out of time. One of the most common mistakes of beginner shooters, is shooting too fast. Take advantage of the time available to you. Take a little extra time to do your pre-shot checks before each shot.
- **Take the rifle down if something is not right.** If you are not holding steady or are likely to fire a poor shot, stop trying to fire that shot, take the rifle down, rest briefly, and try again. There is plenty of time available to make sure you fire the best shots you can.



*Ten-bull targets in place for firing a 3x10 competition event.*

- Keep yourself under control.** One of the most important lessons to learn in target shooting is the importance of **self-control**. It is natural and good to want to do well when you are in a competition. It is also tempting to become upset when there are distractions or when you fire bad shots or disappointing scores. This happens to all shooters at some point. If something goes wrong for you, take control of yourself, be determined not to let anything bother you and remind yourself that the best thing you can do is use your shot plan to focus on firing your next shot correctly.
- Enjoy the competition experience.** **Competitions** are fun. Enjoy the experience of trying to do your best while dealing with the challenges of competition. You should always know that when you finish a competition and can say you worked hard to follow your plan and tried to do your best on each shot, that the competition was a success for you. The score you fired or where you finished in the competition is not important then. What is important, is trying hard to do your best. If you can say you did that, the competition was a success for you.

## CONCLUSION

This Student Text has introduced you to the sport of target rifle shooting. The safety skills you learned will be invaluable to you, regardless of whether you continue to participate in the sport. If learning about rifle marksmanship sparked a new interest for you in the sport of target shooting, it may have opened the doors for you to the excitement and special experiences of high school and collegiate rifle

competitions and the possibility of enjoying a great sport for a lifetime.



*Competition can be the ultimate test of your rifle marksmanship skills. Trying to win awards in major competitions as these award winners in the 2001 National Junior Olympic Championship have done, can become an especially challenging goal for high school rifle shooters.*



*If you can finish a competition knowing you did your best to follow your shot plan and keep yourself under control on each shot, you can be happy with your effort. The competition experience is enjoyable, whether or not you win.*