

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION - GALLERY RIFLE & PISTOL COMMITTEE

So you want to run a 1500 ?

1. One of the most popular competitions on the Gallery Rifle (GR) circuit is the 1500. A demanding course of fire (cof), it combines all the elements of accuracy, speed, distance and position together in a single event – and with 150 rounds required, a good test of stamina and consistency.
2. The 1500 can be shot with GRCF, GRSB LBP or LBR and from 2010, there are also individual events for Standard, Open and Classic firearms. It forms the basis of the international GR competitions with Germany and Ireland and hence the Open competitions around the country act as ‘qualifiers’ for the national team, as well as competitions in their own right.
3. The event is shot in classes, based on class threshold scores; results and classifications are maintained by the NSC Shooting/Competition Division. As such, a typical match will attract all levels of capability, from beginners to international shooters; each knowing they are shooting against a group of their peers. As well as providing a fair challenge to all competitor, the classes form the basis of any prizes and/or awards.
4. Currently, the national 1500 circuit is limited to Bisley (at each of the four GR weekends - Spring Action, the Phoenix, the Nationals and the Autumn Action weekend), plus a number of clubs around the country (such as Frome, Derby, Pinewood, Mattersey, Cheshunt and Basildon). However, for some shooters, the locations are too distant and there are areas of the UK that fail to challenge potentially good shooters, due to lack of local competitions.
5. This brief guide sets out what you as a club could do to change that situation by hosting your own 1500 GR competitions and capitalising on that untapped talent around the country. In the process, you may attract a few new members and generate valuable income for your club. So, if you fancy hosting an Open 1500 competition, read on

Ranges

6. The 1500 is shot at varying distances from 10M to 50M. Whilst you can get ‘scaled’ targets to represent 50M on a 25M range, they are not appropriate for national competition, as they don’t provide a fair and equal challenge, when compared to other 1500 events (the bullet holes are too big by comparison). The range needs to be able to accommodate all conventional Gallery Rifle calibres – both CF and SB – as national events will attract all types of GR firearms. However, matches are shot on both indoor and outdoor ranges, so neither type precludes use. The cof requires barricades for LBP and LBR shooters at both 25 and 50M. Sturdy fence posts, at least 2M high and 100cm square are the norm – with no splinters ! Of course, if your range allows it, you can move targets closer to the shooter, rather than shooters moving down range to the targets i.e. one set of posts.
7. In terms of range width – the more the better ! This really determines your capacity for the match but bear in mind that typically, you’ll want to run 3 or more details in a day (each detail takes 90 minutes) and shooters may either be sharing firearms, or not want to shoot matches ‘back to back’. Accommodating everyone’s needs is not always as easy as it looks. I would suggest at least 10 lanes; some ranges have 20 +, but remember that a large line of shooters requires a larger group of RO’s.

Targetry

8. Targets are typically 1 or 1.5 M separation and the closer elements really require turning targets (you can get away without them at 50M). Each competitor will require 6 target faces per match. The reduced size (about A3) SB targets - which are only used for the GRSB match - are totally refaced each time. GRCF, LBP and LBR all use the larger targets; typically with a full size to start with and a refaced centre (again, about A3) during the match. You can get a good supply of targets from the NRA, Sykes or one of the independent sources. However, make sure you have plenty and that they are of official dimension and quality. Photocopying doesn't always produce the correct dimensions or contrast that is required.
9. Make sure your target frames are up to the strain of your turners (they will typically capture 600+ shots in a day – not all a perfect aim !) and always have a few spare. To avoid cross-shooting, consider numbering your lanes and targets, or even alternating the colour of your frames. A supply of black and white patches, for those shots not quite on centre will be required, as will staples for the refacing. Ensure you have a good supply, including enough robust staplers.

Range Crew.

10. The key to a good match is a good range crew; a national event is not a one-man show. However, nor does it require a hoard of fully qualified RCO's with 10 years experience (should such an animal exist !) What it does need is sufficient staff to manage all aspects of the competition safely, with a couple to spare. Make sure you provide the RO's with pens and scoring gauges; they need to be prepared to assist the competitors with their scoring – although normally, competitors will swap score-cards and score each-others targets.
11. There are some specific roles that need full time attentions. A chief range officer (CRO) will control all the other range crew and take ultimate responsibility for safety. The CRO will also announce the cof and provide direction to shooters. Then, the range crew, who will provide direct supervision to the shooters, clear the range and reface / erect target frames. Range crew are required on a ratio of about 1 to 4 shooters; they don't need formal qualifications, but should be experienced (especially with regard safety) and diligent. It helps to have a 'stats' person dedicated to collating scores. Finally, a Match Director, who supervises the whole event, arbitrate on issues and generally ensures everything runs smoothly. Remember, there are a lot of experienced shooters that are also RO's, and not all of them will want to shoot all the details in a day. In most circumstances, they will help out, as it often breaks up the long wait for the next detail. The best place to gain RO experience is to offer to help out at one of the existing events at Bisley, or at Open matches.

Admin

12. Typically undertaken by the Match Director, match 'admin' covers everything from publicity, entry forms, score sheets, finance, booking shooters in, sponsorship, prizes, to issuing results and any other activity that is not necessarily performed on the day. As such, the role takes up time pre and post the match and despite its importance, is often unseen by most. However, poor admin will impact on the smooth running of the match, so be prepared to invest the effort. One activity that pays dividends is squadding as you'll likely have a number of shooters that will want to take part in multiple events, possibly sharing firearms with others. Planning how they can all shoot their desired matches – with suitable breaks if

needed – will ensure the details transition smoothly. Remember to squad your range crew, so they don't all disappear at once.

13. Using standard score sheets (available as a download from www.galleryrifle.com) will provide familiarity for both crew and shooters, making scoring easier – and of course aid the Stats process. Scoring can be done manually, but best avoided. If you are lucky enough to have a willing 'stats' volunteer, I suggest you get them a PC, printer and power for the day. There are a few scoring packages available – the NRA version is aligned to the standard score sheet, does all the class calculations and prints prize-giving results in the correct format. It provides the definitive data that you'll need to put them into the right classes to shoot your match and also captures the data to feed back into the national classification system, to maintain shooters rankings. There's plenty of help available for someone new to the system – which is reasonably straight forward for most PC literate people.

Prizes

14. Depending on your competition's income (an average charge per event is £10-£12) and outgoings, the prize table can vary considerably. Prizes tend to be awarded based on the number of shooters in each class. A typical guide is 1 - 3 shooters (1st place only) 4 – 7 (1st and 2nd) and 8+ (1st, 2nd and 3rd), but this does vary by event. Increasingly, clubs have been able to get some very generous sponsorship deals; it is very important to remind the shooters to support those who support our sport. However, whether it's a new gun or a 4-pack of beer, shooters are always happy to win a prize ! Finally, ensure your prize giving is done as soon as possible after the match ends – you don't want competitors drifting away and a good crowd always looks better on your photo's / website.

Competitors

15. There are about 400 registered 1500 shooters on the NRA's GR database, with a lot more 'club' shooters waiting in the wings. If your event can attract 10% of that populations, you'll be well on the way to running a very successful match. Typically, an Open 1500 will have about 40 competitors, shooting 1, 2 or even 3 matches. Of course, if you can combine a 1500 event with some other GR activities (such as MT or T&P), all the better. Get your match advertised early – the last thing you'll want to do is clash with other national events. The best way to do this is via the website mentioned above, plus dedicated e-mail lists that the NRA maintains.
16. Finally, when you promote your event, make it as inclusive as possible. The top shooters will always be looking for fresh challenges. However, the newer club shooters can sometimes feel intimidated, or under equipped to compete. All the comps can be shot with out-of-the-box firearms, a couple of spare magazines, or maybe a basic ammo belt, and shooting in peer groups gives everyone a fair chance at the prizes – make sure shooters know this.
17. So, if you've got the range, the facilities, the organisation and a good supporting crew; you just need to set a date, tell everyone, and take that next step. If you want any help, contact the NRA – there is a GR rep dedicated to regional development – ash@fdpc.org.uk , so e-mail him with any questions.