

Greetings from Ontario, Canada.

The 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi will feature a new women's event - the freestyle super pipe skiing event, using the same infrastructure as the snowboarding event. It wasn't easy to convince the International Olympic Committee to add an event of this nature. There were the obvious risks to personal safety as participants hurtled through the air spinning and gyrating, flipping and somersaulting. It was not uncommon for broken bones. Overall the consensus seemed to be, however, that an event contained within the huge "half pipe" may be safer than some of the skiing events that wended along a treacherous mountain decline.

A young lady, born in Barrie, and raised in Midland, both cities within an hour of my hometown of Collingwood, Ontario was a pioneer of this event. Sarah Burke excelled at this sport winning gold medals at virtually all World level events. She would have been a favourite for gold at the Vancouver 2010 Olympics except for one thing - it was not at the time an Olympic sport. She lobbied, she trained, she competed and led the charge to have this new event introduced for the first time at the Sochi Winter Olympic Games - and she succeeded. She was the odds on favourite to win the first Olympic gold medal in this event. On January 10, 2012, during a routine training run in Park City, Utah, Sarah crashed. She suffered irreversible brain damage due to lack of blood and oxygen after cardiac arrest. On January 29, 2012 this 29 year old budding superstar died.

I have shared this information with you for two reasons. Firstly, this is a tribute to a young lady who has been remembered by those that knew her well as a friend, a competitor, and one who constantly inspired others to do greater things. When you watch the 2014 Winter Olympic Women's Half Pipe skiing event, think of Sarah and her contribution not only to the sport she loved but also the triumph of the human spirit that she demonstrated every day.

But there is a second reason I share the Sarah Burke story with you. Some sports are inherently dangerous. I have friends (you probably have as well) who have suffered serious permanent physical disabilities that have resulted from mishaps in hockey, football, skiing - the contact sports in particular have a legacy of disabled victims, some permanently debilitated. Fatalities are fortunately rare. Now, imagine for a moment if the target shooting sports had a high incidence of serious injuries or fatalities. Firearms are already impugned with the worst type of stereotypical anti-social behaviour. If we experienced numerous injuries and heaven forbid a fatality or two our clubs would be closed, there would be criminal investigations, charges...get my point? The fact of the matter is, we are a safe sport because we have to be. We have to always be diligent. Accidents can and must be avoided. . All of us must ensure safety at all levels.

By the time you read this article about 254 Ontario shooters will have been two yard handicap reductions. This was a "head office" initiative to help shooters improve their performance, and the better scores may encourage shooters to register more targets. All delegates are given an override "veto" for any shooter within that delegate's state or province that the delegate believes should not get the 2 yard reduction. I considered it for some time and decided if head office wants to dole out 2 yard reductions I am not going to be the policeman. My intervention would be nothing more than arbitrary. I have therefore decided to leave it up to the judgment of each

shooter. If you have been offered a reduction it is your discretion, not mine. Take it or decline it.

As for the three new categories (Junior Gold (up to age 24), Lady I (under 55), Lady II (over 55) and sub-veteran (55-65), the jury is out. Most shooters that I have talked to welcome the new categories, but are not sure how they will be implemented. Some states (like Ohio I am told) may refuse to acknowledge the new categories. There is still confusion. Perhaps it would have been better for the EC to have consulted the grassroots first, had a vote at the AGM and if it was supported by the shooters, implement all of this at the beginning of a new target year. For now, give the new categories a chance and let's see what happens.

And now for the announcement of the delegate team and category delegate team based on the results of the target year ending August 31, 2011. Congratulations. To win a delegate pin (or delegate category pin) a shooter had to win an event at an Ontario Club provided that the threshold participation level was met.

### **Men's Delegate Team**

Co-captains Bert Blackburn and Verne Higgs - 8 pins each  
3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Tie - Paulo Sampaio and John Costa - 6 pins each  
5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Tie - Ed Wilmott and Billy Zager - 5 pins each  
7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Tie - Lloyd Becroft and Ken Fellows - 4 pins each  
9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> Tie - 7 way tie with three pins each, however, tie is broken as follows:

9<sup>th</sup> Place - George Iliopoulos - won an additional competition but could not win a pin as he was "maxed out" at that club (Toronto International)

10<sup>th</sup> Place - Neville Henderson - tie broken in his favour as he won 3 competitions outright (no coin toss, etc.) at three different clubs.

Honourable mention goes to the following shooters who also won three pins:

Joe DeFrancisco, Don Mattison, Terry Jordan, Nick Kadaris and Doug Kurt

### **Category Delegate Team**

Captain - Germain Spriet - 12 pins  
2<sup>nd</sup> - Warren McLay - 10 pins  
3<sup>rd</sup> - George Jonckhere - 6 pins  
4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> - tie - Don Dolbear and Chuck Kreiger - 5 pins each

In total there were 126 pins won by 62 men shooters, and 111 pins won by 42 category shooters. The above results were based upon information supplied from club shoot management. Where ties resulted and were unresolved by the shooters/shoot management, a coin toss was necessary to determine the winner. Sometimes a category shooter was shown as the winner of an event. That ensured the category shooter got a category pin, but there was sometimes no information as

to the high "men's" shooter and unfortunately, a pin was not therefore assigned. Some shooters "maxed out" at a club, having won two prior pins at the same club in the same event, but there was no record submitted for the "fall back" shooter, which meant again that no pin could be awarded. I exercised my discretion on a few occasions and awarded pins where threshold participation was close, but not quite at the threshold level - this was done particularly in more remote areas where participation is a challenge.

Overall, I was impressed with the level of participation by our shooters and wish to congratulate everyone whether you won a pin or not. Pins earned will be mailed under separate cover to all of those entitled. Please try to ensure that for the current target year you help shoot management resolve any ties and accurately tabulate results.

Good shooting.

Paul Shaw, Ontario ATA Delegate