



Northeast Ohio Airgunners (N.O.A.) Burning River 120 Match Report August 23-25, 2024

(Match Report by Tyler Patner, Match Director)

There's a lot to love about Field Target. It's a problem solvers game, requiring concentration, determination, confidence and a whole host of other words with too many letters in them. It's not for everyone, even though we sometimes wish it was. And as many in our society want everything to be easier and dulled down, Field Target remains an intentional challenge. Shooters walk onto a course with a largely unknown challenge in front of them and face it target by target, shot by shot. On rare occasions, we see a shooter display all of the necessary skills to overcome the challenges of a particular course and produce a little bit of magic. I've been shooting FT for over a decade now, and I've witnessed that magic on display only a handful of times. Little did we know ahead of the weekend, we would be seeing it at the 2024 Burning River 120.

As has become a custom of mine in match reports, I want to start by saying the "Thank You's" to all that make this AAFTA Grand Prix match possible for the Northeast Ohio Airgunners. First and foremost, Anne and Ashley Reily, the property owners of the Twin Oaks Air Rifle Range. Anne and Ashley have allowed us to create a bit of Field Target candyland on their property, and ask for very little in return. Their graciousness and willingness to let us run matches on their property is something that our club is beyond grateful for.

I also want to thank all of our members that put in the time and effort ahead of the match to work on the courses, the targets and clubhouse. It takes a village to put on a good GP match, and we have a fantastic bunch of villagers! You all know who you are!

And last but certainly not least are the 43 shooters that traveled to the match. We appreciate you all for making the trip and spending your weekend with us. This match does not happen without you all, so take the opportunity now to pat yourself on the back, even if you weren't happy with your shooting performance.

On Friday, we started with our pistol match at around 2pm. We had fantastic weather. The sun was out, temps were in the low 80s, it was just a beautiful summer day in Northeast Ohio. Our pistol course was set in the woods, which provides plenty of tricky lighting for shooters to deal with, but this time around, not much wind. The 40 shot match ran quickly and without a hiccup. The course was a 34.1T and based on the scores, definitely proved to be a challenge for most. It should also be pointed out that everyone opted to shoot Hunter, and we had no Limited shooters. Funny enough, something I've never seen before occurred, we finished with a 4-way tie for first place! Bill Rabbitt, Brandon Michaud, Nathan

Thomas, and Steve Hockenberry all produced fantastic 37s. So the placing would be determined by a Sunday shoot-off!

As we turned our attention to Saturday's rifle match, the weather was similarly beautiful, but maybe a touch warmer. All of our Hunter PCP shooters were in the field and everyone else was in the woods. Thankfully for those in the field, it was a still day from a wind perspective, so the top shooters would be those who didn't overthink things and held steady. In the woods, the lighting plays a large factor in the challenge shooters face. And of course, irrespective of the course shot, distance was also a factor. I have a general philosophy when it comes to setting courses, and that is "Distance F*#k\$ everyone equally!" To explain that a bit, Hunter shooters have the greatest difficulty accurately ranging targets beyond 45 yards. Open and WFTF shooters are able to range more accurately at those longer distances, but I've always found that any wobble or lack of physical control from the sitting position is amplified at distance. And this is before wind is factored in, because of course wind makes everyone's life more difficult, especially at greater distances.

Moving on from Field Target philosophy, but not losing sight of it, both the Field and Woods courses featured 19 of the 30 targets at distances over 40 yards. That's 63%. The troyer in the Woods was a 33.1T and the Field was 32.8T before environmentals were factored in. On paper, the courses were pretty similar, but shot very differently. In the Field, Karen Reis turned in the top score of the day with a 56. Followed by Ryan Spanagel on a 54 and Greg Vaughn on a 52. There were also a host of shooters with 51s and 50s, so Sunday would definitely be a tight day for the Hunter PCP shooters.

You'll recall that I started this whole report off talking about some magic, right? Well in the woods, there was something special happening. The day started very calm, with little to no wind. Maybe on the last few lanes, a small amount crept in. From my view through the scope, I never needed to hold outside of the kill zone, just the inside edge was enough to keep my pellets safely in the kill. I had the pleasure of shooting with my good friend Larry Justinus, who is also our club photographer. We carried on through the day with good conversation and a few laughs. Then, with roughly 4 or 5 lanes remaining, Larry basically went mute on me. It didn't dawn on me at the moment, but he was attempting not to mess with me, as my scorecard was still clean. When we finally arrived at our last lane, my card was still unblemished. But thanks to the deviousness of Bill while he was doing lane assignments, my last lane of the day was the standing lane. A short full size kill elevated up high in a tree, and another full size kill in the mid-20s. A challenge (as all offhand lanes are) but very doable. The close target went over without an issue, as did the first shot on the long target. As I focused on the final shot, I found it very difficult to get my reticle into the kill zone. I let the gun rest for a moment, turned around and looked at Larry, and muttered "This is tense!" I am not sure whether or not he heard me, but he was lost in a thousand yard stare down the lane. So I pulled the gun back up, embraced the wobble and sent a pellet into the kill zone, watching the target fall. When it did, Larry jumped from his chair and yelled "YES!" loud enough that I am sure the entire course heard. And so I

turned in a clean scorecard to lead the WFTF PCP division for the day. Followed by Bill Rabbitt on a 54 and Lucas Marusiak and Jeff Paddock on 52s.

In WFTF Piston, Nathan Thomas shot a fantastic 51/60 with his purpled laminate stocked Walther LGU. Just one shot ahead of local, Matt Uhler and his TX200. And in Hunter Piston, Greg Shirhall and Paul Manktelow finished the day tied on a 40 with Al Duster 4 shots back on a 36. And in Open PCP, Brian VanLiew shot a 55/60, producing a dominant lead over the rest of the class.

As shooters returned to the club house, we enjoyed a fried chicken lunch as we all recapped the days shooting. Shortly after, we conducted our raffles. We had a 50/50 raffle as well as a few bottles of mead donated by Paul Nickerson and a Crosman Prospect rifle donated by Pyramyd Air. And as has become customary on Saturday evenings during our GPs, a decent group of us met at the local Cowboy Bar and Grill for dinner and drinks. A fantastic end to a great day!

On Sunday morning, the skies were a bit overcast, and there were calls for some light rain through the morning. Thankfully we dodged most of it as the match got underway. I should also mention that we had a friendly face join us for the day, Nic Gregoris. Nic shot with Bill and I on the field course as he was shooting WFTF PCP. We proceeded through the course with no issues and not too much in the way of wind to deal with. Then, about halfway through the course, the clouds darkened and rain started spitting down. Not a terrible amount, but enough to be annoying. This carried on for about 20 minutes or so before stopping. It started for us on lane 13, which was a treacherous kneeling lane with one full size kill at about 30 yards and the other out in the low 40s. Having already cleared offhand (and clean overall on the day), but generally feeling far more shaky than Saturday, I won't say that the possibility of missing one of these kneelers didn't cross my mind. I managed to hold my nerve and sneak the pellets into the kill zones, and the targets obliged. Lane 14 though, was a little bit of a different story. You see, with the rain, came a bit of wind. Nothing too crazy, but wind nonetheless. And the long target was on an elevated tree stand 12-15 feet off the ground. I tried to steady my wobble as best I could, but between the wind and my wobble, I watched my pellet land just on the right edge of the kill zone, and the target stood tall. I kept it together though, and dropped it on the second shot. So a perfect score for the GP was not to be, but there was still work to be done! As we walked back to lane 1 after shooting lane 15, the clouds cleared out and the sun returned. Thankfully, pop up tents placed over a handful of the lanes acted as reliable shade throughout the course.

There was minimal wind the rest of the way, and as I settled in to shoot my last lane, I heard from behind me that my good buddy Keith Walters had finished his day on a 59! That's his best single day score ever in WFTF PCP and I was super happy for him. I cleared the lane, congratulated Keith on his great performance and told him that I couldn't let him beat me, so he'd have to settle for a tie. We shared a laugh and headed into the club house to see how the rest of the scores shook out.

In WFTF Piston, Nathan Thomas managed to keep his lead over Matt Uhler, posting another great 51 (102 overall). Matt finished the day with a very solid 49 to secure second place. In Open PCP, Brian VanLiew bettered his day one performance with a 57 to secure the top spot in the class (112 overall). He was followed by Larry Gromacki, who finished with a 97 overall to take second. After Greg Shirhall encountered some rifle and scope issues on the course, Al Duster charged back from behind both Greg and Paul to claim victory in Hunter Piston. Al's 42 on the day put him at 78, and Paul ended a few shots back with a 75 overall. In WFTF PCP, my 119/120 was the top score, and Keith managed to jump everyone with his 59 on day two to take second place with a 107. And Lucas Marusiak bettered his day one performance by two shots with a 54, securing third place (106 overall).

As the Hunter PCP shooters returned from the woods, it was clear that there would be at least one other shoot off in addition to our pistol shoot off. Brandon Michaud, Karen Reis and Ryan Spanagel were all tied on 104. But Greg Vaughn, who had finished on 52 the first day, had yet to return from the woods. As he emerged and turned in his scorecard, his 53 put him one shot above the rest to claim the Hunter PCP title for the weekend (105 overall).

We started the shoot-offs with the Hunter Pistol, 4-way showdown! Bill Rabbitt, Brandon Michaud, Nathan Thomas, and Steve Hockenberry all settled onto the sight in range firing line. We set each of them up with a 1" target, right around 30 yards. As the timer started, Nathan struck first, dropping the target easily, which none of the others matched. Meaning Nathan was our Hunter Pistol Champion! On the next pass, Brandon Michaud would drop his target to claim second! Down to the last two, both Bill and Steve dropped the target on their third try, so they went again and Steve was able to hold steady and take his target down. Bill was unable to match. Just like that, our podium was complete.

Turning our attention now to the Hunter PCP shoot-off for 2nd and 3rd, Brandon, Karen and Ryan made themselves comfortable on the sight in range as we set out another set of blocks for a far target. We had a 1" at 30 still, and each shooter had a 1.5" at around 50 yards to contend with as well. They began from the normal seated position on the close target, all three dropping it without issue. Then onto the far target, again, all three dropped it. Onto kneeling, where Karen was the only shooter to drop their 1" target, claiming 2nd place! Now to decide 3rd. Brandon and Ryan (good friends and travel buddies) stayed kneeling and on their next attempts, neither were able to drop the target from the kneeling position. We decided to give them one more shot at it from kneeling. Brandon shot first, but missed. Ryan took his time, steadied himself and was able to successfully drop his target, deciding 3rd place. Congrats and thanks to all the participants for the fun and entertaining shoot-offs!

After lunch, we handed out awards, said our Thank You's and good-byes and began tearing down the courses and cleaning up the club house. Another successful Burning River 120 was in the books, possibly the best one yet. On behalf of everyone at NOA, I want to

thank all that attended this years match, your support means the world to us and helps keep the club going. We are looking forward to our 5th Burning River 120 in 2025, which will also be our clubs 10th anniversary! It's sure to be a great time, and I hope to see you all there.

But until then, stay safe and we will see you on the lanes!

N.O.A. August 23-25, 2024 BR 120 AAFTA Grand Prix Match Results

Place	Name	Class	Rifle	Scope	Pellet	Woods Score	Field Score	Total/120
1	Greg Vaughan	Hunter PCP	RAW TM-1000	March 10-60x56	JSB 13.43	53	52	105
2	Karen Reis	Hunter PCP	Thomas	Sightron 10-60 FT	JSB 13.43	48	56	104*
3	Ryan Spanagel	Hunter PCP	Daystate Redwolf	Hawke Sidewinder 6-24	Benjamin 10.5	50	54	104
4	Brandon Michaud	Hunter PCP	Benjamin Marauder	Hawke Sidewinder 6-24	Benjamin 10.5	55	49	104
5	Doug Cunningham	Hunter PCP	Thomas	Sightron SIII FT 10-50x60	JSB 13.43	53	49	102
6	Tim Baylor	Hunter PCP	Thomas	Nightforce	JSB 13.4	51	50	101
7	Eric Jones	Hunter PCP	Crosman Challenger	Hawke Sidewinder 6-24x50	AA 10.34	52	47	99
8	Jamie Marusiak	Hunter PCP	AA S500	Hawke Airmax 4-16x44	AA 10.34	51	48	99
9	Stephen Hockenberry	Hunter PCP	Daystate Wolverine R	Sightron III	AA 10.34	48	51	99
10	Cam Armstrong	Hunter PCP	Daystate Redwolf	SWFA 4-15	AA 10.34	49	50	99
11	Stephan Hottenrott	Hunter PCP	Daystate Redwolf	Bushnell 4200	JSB 13.43	52	46	98
12	Jeff Swartz	Hunter PCP	Thomas Carbine	Kahles 1050iFT 10-50x	JSB 13.43	48	50	98
13	Dale Prulhiere	Hunter PCP	Daystate Wolverine	Athlon Heras 6-24x56	AA 10.34	51	46	97
14	Douglas Rogers	Hunter PCP	Weihrauch HW100	Hawke ED 10-50x60	AA 10.34	46	51	97
15	Rick Smelko	Hunter PCP	Brocock Sniper XR	Athlon 6-24 Argos BTR	Benjamin 10.5	48	48	96
16	Luis Jimenez Jr	Hunter PCP	Daystate Redwolf	Athlon Midas	FX 13.4	43	48	91
17	Rick Vaeth	Hunter PCP	FX Crown	Hawke 8-32x56	JSB 13.4	46	42	88
18	Ken Santo	Hunter PCP	Wolverine	Arken	Benjamin 10.5	46	40	86
19	Dave Kovach	Hunter PCP	Daystate Wolverine R	Riton, Conquer5, 5 x 25 x 50	JSB 10.34	43	42	85
20	Richard D Sarama Jr	Hunter PCP	FX Crown	Element Helix 6-24	FX 10.3	47	38	85
21	Ronald Francis	Hunter PCP	BRK Sniper	Hawke 6-24	Benjamin 10.5	39	39	78
22	Paul Nickerson	Hunter PCP	Daystate Wolverine	Sightron SIII 10x50	JSB 13.43	37	34	71
23	Skip Tenney	Hunter PCP	Daystate Wolvarine	Hawkw Sidewinder 8-32	JSB 13.43	21	34	55
1	Al Duster	Hunter Piston	Diana 56	Sightron FT 10x50x60	JSB 10.34	36	42	78
2	Paul Manktelow	Hunter Piston	Walther LGU	Hawke Sidewinder 8-40x56	FX 8.4	40	35	75
3	Greg Shirhall	Hunter Piston	Walther LGU	Bushnell Elite 4200 6-24x40	JSB 8.4	40	19	59
4	Brian Sarama	Hunter Piston	Weihrauch HW97K	Element Helix 6-24	JSB 8.4	28	19	47
1	Brian VanLiew	Open PCP	TM1000	Nikko Diamond 10-50	AA 10.3	55	57	112
2	Larry Gromacki	Open PCP	Thomas	March 10-60	JSB 13.43	47	50	97
3	Roger Barker	Open PCP	Air Arms Protarget	Sightron III 10-50X60	AA 10.3	47	48	95
4	Larry Justinus	Open PCP	RAW	Nightforce	AA 10.3	43	42	85
1	Tyler Patner	WFTF PCP	Thomas	March 10-60 HM	AA 8.4	60	59	119
2	Keith Walters	WFTF PCP	Air Arms XTI-50	March 8-80x	JSB 8.4	48	59	107
3	Lucas Marusiak	WFTF PCP	Thomas FT	Sightron SIII 10-50x60	AA 8.4	52	54	106
4	Bill Rabbitt	WFTF PCP	Thomas Carbine	March HM 10-60	JSB 8.4	54	50	104
5	Jeff Paddock	WFTF PCP	Air Arms EV2	Vortex G.E. HD 15-60 x 52	JSB 8.4	52	52	104
6	Ted Andro	WFTF PCP	Thomas	Sightron	AA 8.4	49	21	70
7	Briquelle March	WFTF PCP	Air Arms S400 MPRFT	Nikko Sterling 10-50 x 60	JSB 8.4	16	24	40
8	Nic Gregoris	WFTF PCP	Air Arms S400 MPRFT	Hawke Sidewinder ED	AA 8.4		39	39
1	Nathan Thomas	WFTF Piston	Walther LGU	Bushnell Elite 8-32x 40	AA 8.4	51	51	102
2	Matt Uhler	WFTF Piston	Air Arms TX200	Hawke Sidewinder 8-32	AA 8.4	50	49	99
3	John Cerne	WFTF Piston	Air Arms TX200	Sightron SIII 10-50x	AA 8.4	49	42	91
4	Daniel Putz	WFTF Piston	Air Arms TX200	March High Master 10-60x56	JSB 10.34	43	46	89
43 total								
							* Tie decided by shoot-off	
							R.M. = redesigned Monster	

N.O.A. August 23-25, 2024 BR 120 Pistol Match Results

Place	Name	Class	Pistol	Scope	Pellet	Score/40
1	Nathan Thomas	Hunter	Crosman 1720t	Bushnell Elite 6-24x40	AA 8.4	37*
2	Brandon Michaud	Hunter	Crosman 1720T	Vector Veyron 4-16x44	AA 8.4	37
3	Stephen Hockenberry	Hunter	Thomas	Sightron III	FX 8.4	37
4	Bill Rabbitt	Hunter	Crosman 1720T	Hawke 3-12X	JSB 7.9	37
5	Brian VanLiew	Hunter	FX Elite	UTG 3-12	JSB 7.9	35
6	Daniel Putz	Hunter	Crosman 1720	Bushnell Nitro 2-12	H&N Sniper 8.5	34
7	Doug Cunningham	Hunter	Crossman 1720T	Hawke Airmax 3-12 Compact	FX 8.4	33
8	Rick Vaeth	Hunter	Crosman 1720T	Aztec Emerald 5.5-25x50	JSB 7.9	32
9	Ted Andro	Hunter	Raw Micro Hunter	UTG	JSB	32
10	Jeff Swartz	Hunter	Crosman 1720T	Hawke Sidewinder	JSB 10.34	28
11	Ryan Spanagel	Hunter	Weihrauch HW44	Hawke Sidewinder 6-24	Benjamin 10.5	28
12	Eric Jones	Hunter	Crosman MK1 Custom	Hawke Sidewinder 3-12x50	Air Falcon 13.4	26
13	Ken Santo	Hunter	P-Rod	Hawke Sidewinder	HN FTT 14.66	26
14	Ronald Francis	Hunter	Crossman 1720	UTG	Benjamin 10.5	26
15	Dale Prulhiere	Hunter	AR Benjamin Marauder	Bushnell Match Pro 6-24x50	Benjamin 10.5	24
16	Paul Nickerson	Hunter	Crosman 1720t Custom	Element Helix	Benjamin 10.5	13
17	Brian Sarama	Hunter	Hatsan Jet 2	Covenant 5 3-15	JTS 16.08	3
18	Skip Tenney	Hunter	Rosman 1720T	Athlon Talos 4-14	JSB 10.34	DNF

18 total

* Tie decided by shoot-off