



2012 BLACK POWDER NATIONALS HELD IN CAPE TOWN

REPORTER Greg van Schaik

Our shooting sports are delightfully diverse and really offer something for everybody. One of the more interesting is the area of black powder shooting. There is nothing quite like the smell of real gunsmoke!

Black powder has enjoyed good steady growth in South Africa over the past few years, notwithstanding the difficulty of obtaining powder and percussion caps in some areas. The introduction of the "Hawken" events bodes well for getting more people involved in the sport who may not want to start out with the expense of a full-on reproduction target rifle which have become quite expensive. The accuracy that is achievable with firearms that are 150 years old (or replicas) is simply unbelievable. These guys and girls shoot pistols at 25 and 50 metres and rifles at up to 900 metres. Most of us are quite happy with groups of one or two minutes of angle with our centre-fire rifles – these people are doing this with muzzle loaders!

The competitive side of black powder shooting is organised by the Black Powder Shooting Union (BPSU) which operates under the auspices of the South African Bisley Union (SABU). All shooting sports fall under the umbrella of the South African Shooting Sports Federation (SASSF).

It may not be generally well known, but our black powder shooters have been awarded Protea colours and have competed with great success on the international stage, with several world cham-

pions in the ranks, including some up-and-coming younger members. Have a look at the BPSU website for some interesting information on this and the background to black powder shooting in South Africa (www.bpsu.co.za). It is quite an eye-opener. The shooting events are split into short range (up to 200m) and long range (300m to 900m) shoots. Western Province hosted the national short range championships in Cape Town at the Durbanville shooting range on the October 5 and 6. The events included pistol at 25 and 50 metres, and rifle up to 200m.

Attendance was good with competitors mostly from Western Province and Gauteng. Fortunately the Cape weather played along with cool conditions and light winds. The organisation was great with events flowing smoothly, refreshments on sale throughout the days and a spit-braai on Friday evening.

On Friday the 200m events were shot (free rifle, military rifle and free breech loader) with Saturday being allocated for the rest of the events, starting with pistol (single shot pistol and revolver) on the 25m range and 50m events on the main range, before shifting on to the 100m events.



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The events shot were:

25m Events
Single Shot Pistol
25m Revolver

50m Events
Lamarmora (Military Rifle Off-Hand)
Hawken Modern
Hawken Traditional
Vetterli (Free Rifle Off-Hand)
Pennsylvania (Flintlock)
Donald Malson (Revolver)

100m Events
Whitworth (Free Rifle)
Minie (Military Rifle)
Free Breech Loader
Hawken Traditional
Hawken Modern

Have a look at the BPSU website for a detailed look at the scores and winners (http://www.bpsu.co.za/BPSU_Results/2012/Results_Nationals2012.pdf) Cape Town will also be playing host to the BPSU Long Range National Championship which will be held at the Good Hope Range from April 4 to 6 2013.

Some more good news is that South Africa will be fortunate to host the World Long and Short Range Championships – both in Cape Town, in 2013 and 2014 respectively. Coaches have been appointed to begin the process of selecting and coaching Protea teams to represent South Africa at these prestigious events.

Should you be interested in giving this great shooting sport a try, visit a black powder club near you or contact one of the BPSU management committee members whose details are on the BPSU webpage. Have fun!

