

Friends and Shooters,

1/1/2024

Happy New Year! There is a beautiful sunrise out my window this morning marking a great start to a hopefully wonderful new year. Most people seem to prefer New Year's eve, but I like New Year's day, especially the morning. I guess it just seems like a fresh new start, uncorrupted by anything and ready to be made into whatever I want to make of it. So here we go, whether we like it or not! Lol

We held possibly the most rewarding match of the year on Saturday here at Smithmoor East. We call it The Kid's Match and we are trying to make it an annual event. Throughout the year, family's and kid's lives are so busy it is really hard to find a Saturday that is not already full of plans. It has worked out the last couple of years however to use the Saturday between Christmas and New Year's. For the most part, unless folks are out of town to see family for the Christmas, they are home and don't have much planned. It has worked out great for parents to bring their kids out and shoot with them. Notice I said "with them." There is no dumping your kids off for the day while you go shopping. No, the parents stay and support the kids while they shoot. Smithmoor is about making memories as families together, and that's what we did. I'm still smiling ear to ear at the fun we had and the memories we made.

We made contact with quite a few kids and had several more that were planning on being there, but didn't make it at the last minute. I reminded the 13 kids that did make it that about 50% of success is just showing up. It also takes courage to show up around a bunch of strangers and try something new. I am forever amazed, encouraged, and proud of how courageous, courteous, intelligent, and determined our kids that shot are. I'm telling you, it will really give a guy a better, positive perspective about the future. All those folks yacking negatively about today's youth have not met the kids that were at Smithmoor on Saturday. If they had, they would have a different opinion.

It is a bit of a trick trying to come up with a course of fire that will be fun and challenging, but not so hard that the newer or younger kids won't be able to hit

anything. I think we did pretty good, but it may have been a little easy, although no one cleaned the course. We put our two Texas Star targets with 5 inch discs at about 25 yards and gave them unlimited shots on it. The Division 2 newer or younger kids shot it prone, but I made the older and more experienced Division One kids shoot it offhand. I knew it would be a little easy, but I was surprised everyone cleaned it except my poor daughter Grace. We had a gag prize for her at the awards and she was sure to shoot me some dirty looks. I wanted one easy station so everyone could have some success. It was fun watching those kids giggle as they smacked those discs.

The second station was fun and was the result of the generosity of Greg Tryon. Greg has a plasma cutter and cut out some really cool dinosaur silhouettes. There were six of them and they ranged in size from about ram sized to about chicken sized. I built a stand for them and arranged them from left to right, large to small. They were shot "know your limits" style in that you had to start big and work your way smaller. If you missed then you had to start over. Whichever number you were on when the time ran out was your score. There is a bit of strategy involved as if you have four or five of the six and only a minute left, do you take the risk and shoot again? If you hit it, then you get the glory of scoring a six, but if you miss you get a score of zero and don't have enough time to start over. It was fun and the kids did well. I'm thinking this might be a fifth station for our next winter series match....

For the last two stations we shot our normal silhouette animals. We did move them up though. The turkeys were put on the pig line (100 yards) and the pigs were moved to the chicken line. I used five lever gun animals first, which are slightly larger than our 22 BPCR ones, then we had four 22 BPCR ones, and then one lever gun chicken. It worked pretty well.

The list of thank yous is nearly endless for the people that all helped out and made this match super. I hope I don't forget anyone. We had Greg Tryon make the dinosaur targets, Grizz donated a whole case of ammo to give away, Michael Rix has done tons of work to the shooting shed to help make it nice and helped

clean up and get ready for the match, Dan Womer donated ammo, Joe Kapler donated some super cool real dinosaur teeth for prizes, and Mom and Dad went to town and came back with a couple hundred bucks worth of candy for prizes! Wow! We had some nice prizes and the kids loved them. Thank you to everyone that donates to this match, I can assure you it was money well spent.

It takes several people to run the match, help the kids, and generally make things go well. The whole idea of the Kids' match was Mark Pachares and he works extra hard throughout the match helping everyone be successful. Thank you Mark. Ed and Beth Himelhoch are always super supporters and they were there early and stayed late setting up, picking up, helping kids, bringing food, and doing whatever needed done. Thank you Ed and Beth. As usual, Coralee worked her tail off that day. Up early getting farm chores done, then making certificates, soup and bread for lunch, and helped run the match. I think everyone knows, but Coralee does a LOT for Smithmoor Range and it would be nothing without her. Thank you Dear. Besides donating the ton of candy, Dad helped out all day spotting for and encouraging kids. Thank you Dad.

The shooting was intense! It always makes me grin seeing those kids really concentrating and trying hard, absolutely determined to shoot their best. There were lots of smiles when they succeeded, and a few tears from those that didn't. They quickly put it behind them and were good sports, clapping and cheering for those that won. They left determined to do better next time.

We had two ties and had to shoot them off. One of them was for 2nd place in division two. Kynsee and Matthew had a pure tie with 33's. We quickly set our normal chickens back on the 50 yard chicken line and set up the shoot off. They shot them prone and went best of five after sighting in on the swinger target. Going into it, I was a little worried these young shooters would be able to hit those tiny chickens, but my worry was for naught as both of them smacked four of the five! Unfortunately, Matthew accidentally shot one out of order, which left Kynsee with the win for second place and left Matthew with 3rd. Yahoo! It was exciting! My boy Eli (10) shot a super 34 to be 1st in Division two, and let me tell

you he was proud. I don't push my kids to shoot, and they plink quite a bit, but are really just now getting interested in shooting the matches. I didn't help or coach Eli much at all and left his success or failure up to him. His win truly belongs to him as he did most all of the work. His Grandpa (Dad) and Uncle Monte coached him and were probably as pleased as Eli was. Great Job Eli, we are all proud of you!

In division one, Mark Pachares' daughter Miranda shot a good 32 to be third, while new shooter Tommy shot an excellent first time score of 33 to be second. We had another tie for the match winner between Benjamin and Mark's other daughter Madison with 35's. Both of them only dropped one target all day! They shot off on the chickens like division two, and Madison came out the winner to be the overall Match Winner, which left Benjamin with 1st place in Division One. Benjamin and Madison both had practiced to prepare for the match. They both brought their A game and it was fun watching them compete. Great Shooting! The winners got to pick from the prize table, but generally each of them took home a huge bag of candy, a brick of high quality match ammo, and a genuine dinosaur tooth, as well as a Smithmoor Certificate and pin. It was really nice to be able to offer a great prize table and a giant thank you goes out again to those that donated to it. The kids truly appreciated their prizes.

We are planning a kids match again for next year. Be thinking about kids to bring to it as well as keep an eye out for fun, creative prizes. Thank you to all that make this match such a success.

As announced previously, our January 22 Winter Series match is scheduled for the 3rd Saturday this month, rather than the usual second. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone on the 20th!

Happy New Year!!
Cody

Shooter Star Dinos Pigs Turkeys

Division One

Grace 7 7 8 2 24

Miranda 10 6 6 32 3rd

Madison 10 10 9 6 35 MW

Bella 10 9 6 6 31

Benjamin 10 10 9 6 35 1st

Tommy 10 10 7 6 33 2nd

Division 2

Eli 10 10 8 6 34 1st

Asa 10 8 4 6 28

Breccan 10 6 7 3 26

Avalyn 10 7 0 2 19

Kynsee 10 9 8 6 33 2nd

Matthew 10 9 8 6 33 3rd

James 10 9 7 4 30